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## Cosmic Clowns

Convention, Invention, and Inversion in the Yaqui Easter Ritual

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## Introduction

This is a study about masked clown figures called *Chapayekas*. They represent Judas and the Roman soldiers in the Easter ritual of the Yaquis, an indigenous group in North Western Mexico. The original lands and most current communities are in southern Sonora, but there are also communities in other parts of the state and in Arizona, USA. The narrative core of the Easter ritual is the Way of the Cross, the crucifixion, death, and rebirth of Jesus, first introduced to the Yaquis by Jesuit missionaries in the 17th century.

The Yaquis and their Easter ritual have been written about quite extensively (Olavarria 2003, Painter 1986, Schechner 1997, Spicer 1940, 1954, 1980, 1997). The Easter ritual can be said to be the most important ritual for the community in the course of a year, as it incorporates the whole community and brings together all the ceremonial groups and through them the different aspects of Yaqui religion (Spicer 1997: 26-27). The Easter ritual is linked to the renewal and continuity of identity, tradition and culture; "the highest values of the Yaqui community are embodied in the maintenance of the customs... [n]o other ceremonial encompasses all the parts and expresses... the relations among these parts of the Yaqui universe." (ibid. 85). I agree with the conclusions about the importance of the ritual for the continuity of culture as the ultimate expression of Yaqui cosmology, but while many of the previous texts offer excellent detailed description of the rituals and discuss interpretations of the symbolism, there has not been much analysis as to how exactly the ritual and its expressions are related to the continuity of Yaqui culture. María Eugenia Olavarria (2003) provides a structural analysis of Yaqui rituals and symbolism. Her work offers valuable insight into the meaningful oppositions within the system of symbols, but presents a rather static picture of the cosmology as a set of cultural categories that generate the annual and individual cycles of ritual. My study presents a picture of the cosmology as cycles of opposed principles and powers that alternate through dialectic interaction rather than as the function of structural categories existing beyond and behind symbolic action. It should be noted that the notion of power as I use it throughout the study refers to cosmological, rather than mundane social or political power.

Bruce Kapferer has suggested shifting the focus from process to dynamics in analysing ritual. "While process and dynamics are mutually implicated...a focus on dynamics, rather than process, moves the understanding of ritual beyond an emphasis of symbolic meaning, reflexivity, and representation." (Kapferer 2004: 36). Dynamics, a concept Kapferer takes from Suzanne Langer, "escapes the progressive,

successional connotations of the term 'process,' which, while it accentuates the active, changing, and transformational character of rite, obscures the constitutive force of ritual as this is realized through the compositional forces of ritual action" (ibid. 39). While process is usually opposed to statics, both are included in Kapferer's idea of dynamics (ibid. 40). The Yaqui Easter ritual is a dynamic trope of cosmology, and the ritual clown is an essential part of these dynamics of meaning on various different levels.

Many texts emphasize the importance of the Chapayekas as ritual figures, but analysis just as to why and how they are important is scant. The Chapayekas have been interpreted as representations of evil beings by Edward Spicer (1980), and as providers of comic relief by Rosamond Spicer in an unpublished article. Richard Schechner (1997) interprets the Chapayekas as a representation of contradictory aspects of Yaqui identity. Shirley Deshon Carré (1997) has written about "change and persistence" in the forms of Chapayeka performance in Arizona between the 1930s and 1980s. She notes that the "Chapayeka actions may be divided into two categories. One in which they are more formalized and relevant to the ritual circumstances... and the second where they tend to be freer, spontaneous..." (ibid. 145). She says the variation may be interpreted as an attempt to "improve the ceremonies" but does not go further in her explanation (ibid.148). Deshon Carré concludes that there is both continuity and flexibility in the "Chapayeka complex," but that over time the amount of "extemporaneous pantomime and burlesque" has lessened and the Chapayeka has become "a milder sort of clown" (ibid. 148-149). Although it is impossible to say whether there is relatively more or less clowning today in Sonora than in the time considered by Deshon Carré in Arizona, my study shows that improvised clowning is an important part of the Chapayeka performance and a vital part of mediating the relation of the ritual to its larger context. The Chapayekas are paradoxical and ambiguous, slippery to pin down like other tricksters and clowns. The interpretations given in previous texts are not sufficient, as they are unable to connect the different aspects of the Chapayekas, and when these aspects are taken separately it is hard to see what the part of this contradictory figure is in the dynamics of the Easter ritual as a whole.

My study is the first comprehensive description and analysis of the Chapayekas as ritual figures and the different aspects of their performance. The combination of recent ethnographic description based on my observations and an innovative theoretical perspective provides new insight on the Chapayekas and the Easter ritual. As has been noted in previous ethnography, the Chapayekas combine two kinds of performance: they perform set, conventional actions and improvise and invent new actions. Change and continuity are present in the figure in other ways as well, most notably in the masks as all but two are destroyed in the end and

new ones are made each year. An application of the theories of Roy Wagner makes it possible to appreciate both sides of the Chapayeka performance and the relation between them. The aspects of change and continuity embodied in the Chapayekas as figures and in their performance create a dialectic of invention and convention that allows the figure to mediate between the ritual and its context and different kinds of beings within the Yaqui cosmology.

The material was gathered over three periods of field work in Córorit, Sonora, where I observed the preparations and performance of Easter in 2004, 2006 and 2007. I conducted interviews with performers and other participants, but I found that the best way to talk about the rituals was casual conversation while they were going on. Apart from this I also visited archives and museums in Mexico City, cd. Obregón, and Tucson, Arizona.

There are restrictions on how the Chapayekas are to be treated – for the performers, for spectators and also for someone like me who wants to analyse them. Many people feel that certain aspects of Chapayeka performance should not be discussed with someone who isn't a Chapayeka, least of all with an outsider. This was stated to me on no uncertain terms on my brief visit to the Yaqui reservation in Pascua, Arizona. In Sonora the situation was more nuanced, but the fact remains that knowledge of the Chapayekas is not unequivocally available to anyone and everyone and this must be respected. This is partly the reason I chose the public aspects of Chapayeka performance as the main focus of my analysis. Also because of this, I do not give extensive biographies and do not fully identify the people who were kind enough to do interviews with me. To focus on the ritual as a public, shared trope is also a theoretical and analytical choice. The ritual remains impressive and impactful for those who witness it without being privy to the deeper levels of knowledge – which actually includes most of the spectators and many participants. I argue that the source of this impact and efficacy is the ritual itself, which is why it remains an important part of Yaqui culture through changing contexts and also why the performance as a dynamic sequence of images must be the starting point of analysis.

### **Research questions**

My main research question is: what is the part of the Chapayeka in the dynamics of the Easter ritual as a metaphor of Yaqui cosmology? To answer this, I examine how the Chapayeka is created as a figure and how the performance is constructed. How are convention and invention related in the two kinds of performance modes and what do these different kinds of performance – and switching between them – accomplish? The Yaqui Easter ritual exhibits remarkable continuity of form across time and space –

except for the Chapayekas, whose masks and performance do change from year to year. How is the change and continuity of the Chapayekas related to change and continuity in the ritual on one hand and in the wider context on the other? How do the ritual's unchanging forms stay meaningful? Ritual tradition is considered an important part of Yaqui identity, in both emic and etic senses, but what exactly is the part of the ritual in the continuity of Yaqui culture? The Chapayeka masks portray foreign and Other, non-Yaqui humans, animals, mythological figures and even figures from television and movies. Schechner (1997) has argued that the Chapayekas represent different aspects of Yaqui identity, but I take an opposite view and claim that an important aspect of the Chapayekas as figures is their otherness, something opposed to the Yaqui self. What is the meaning of this otherness? The ambiguity of the Chapayekas has made them very difficult to analyse; how can the different, contradictory and paradoxical aspects of the figure be equally appreciated? Finally, can the specific case of the Chapayekas be used to say something about other clowns?

### **Invention and convention**

My main theoretical source is the work of Roy Wagner (1981, 1986, 1992). In Wagner's model as presented in *The Invention of Culture* (1981), culture is based on and precipitated through a dialectic of invention and convention. Convention is what has been established – what makes an expression intelligible – and invention is the meaningful use of these elements in new contexts through metaphorical extension, “the interpretive elicitation of meanings” (Wagner 1986: x). This may lead to new conventions, which in turn can serve as bases for new inventions. There are two modes of symbolizing, collectivizing and differentiating, defined by whether convention or invention is emphasized. Collectivizing means deliberately following a pre-existing model. Differentiating means the creation of intentionally “new,” different, or “unique” symbolizations. (Wagner 1981: 47-48).

The two modes have different relations to contexts, or rather, they create different contexts by the different points of view they embody within the total scheme of meaning. Conventional symbols have the property of standing for or denoting something other than themselves. A contextual contrast is created; the symbols abstract themselves from the symbolized. This is the traditional notion of symbol. (ibid. 42). When a symbol is used in some nonconventional way “... a new referent is introduced simultaneously with the novel symbolization... the tension and contrast between symbol and symbolization collapse, the symbol stands for itself” (ibid. 43). A unique artwork, such as the Mona Lisa, would be an example.

“A conventional symbolization objectifies its disparate context by bestowing order and rational integration upon it; a differentiating

symbolization specifies and concretizes the conventional world by drawing radical distinctions and delineating individualities" (ibid. 44). "Invention changes things and convention resolves those changes into a recognizable world" (ibid. 53). The Mona Lisa is something we recognize as a painting. Since every symbolic expression necessarily has both conventional and new or individual elements, all symbolic effects are mobilized in any act of symbolization. Hence a meaningful and integrated experience of the world requires that the awareness of the symbolizer must be concentrated upon one of the modes at any given time. Wagner calls the context that the actor is focused upon the control. When the conventional context is the control, the actor is focusing on an articulation of things that conforms to some sort of cultural and moral convention. The articulation is in explicit conformity with some collectively held ideal or expectation. At the same time there are always particular and nonconventionalized aspects to the action. (ibid. 45-46). An example would be a musician playing a previously composed musical piece, which will still have particular aspects as it is played at this very moment by this particular person on this particular instrument.

"When the nonconventionalized context is the one that serves as the control, the actor is focusing on an articulation of things that differs in some ways from the conventions of social (and moral) expectation." Of course the result will include conventional characteristics as well. (ibid. 47). An example would be composing a new piece of music using a conventional system of notes. The non-controlling context is perceived as a kind of resistance, and thus motivation for action. This creates a distinction between what we "are" and what we "do." Wagner says "By inventing the culturally prescribed collectivities, we counterinvent our notion of a "given" world of natural facts and motivations" (ibid. 47). According to Wagner, "every culture...will favor one symbolic modality as the area appropriate to human action and regard the other as manifesting the "given" or "innate" world" (ibid. xv). Although one or the other will be considered as more fundamental in a given context, such as art, ritual, or everyday life – any of which could be based on either mode – both modes exist in every society and culture. Reversing the orientation is a way of moving between different realms of meaningful action. In both modes, for the actor some of the effects of the symbolization are regarded as the result of his intentions, what he is doing, others are identified with the cause or motivation of his intentions. Between the two kinds of objectifications a whole world is invented. "Our symbols do not relate to an external "reality" at all; at most they refer to other symbolizations, which we perceive as reality" (ibid. 42). The mode of symbolization defines the forms of action and the interpretation of experience. "It is an invention that constantly re-creates its orientation and an orientation that continually facilitates its own reinvention." (ibid. 52). Humans make a division into the

area of the innate or inherent and the area of human responsibility. However, Wagner points out that these areas overlap or merge, and humans are able to “do things they shouldn’t be able to do” and change many things that are considered part of the given, that are supposed to be beyond change. (Macfarlane 2008). This agency and efficacy is partly created by reversing the mode of symbolization, by going from “everyday life” to for example art or ritual, where action will have a different effect. In this view, not only expressions but all acts of perception, thought, and expression are symbolizations.

The effects of conventionalizing and differentiating are opposite. Each mode “corresponds to a particular kind of cultural continuity, self, society, and world,” and particular problems and motivations (Wagner 1981: 116). The distinction also “provides the axis between socialising (collective) and power-compelling (individuating) expressions” (ibid. xiv). A differentiating symbolization is an attempt to “knock the conventional off balance” and so make oneself powerful in relation to it (ibid. 88).

Each mode is perpetuated through a dialectic of what are seen as the controlling and motivating contexts of action. Since one context resists and thus motivates what the actor sees as his intention, he is compelled to keep trying, according to the demands of what he sees as the controlling context, which in turn recreates the motivating context and so on (ibid. 52). Conventionalizing symbolizations “create the incidental world by constantly trying to predict, rationalize, and order it” and differentiating symbolizations create a “universe of innate convention by constantly trying to change, adjust, and impinge upon it” (ibid. 87).

The musician keeps trying to play the existing piece of music better, the composer keeps trying to write a more original piece. In Wagner’s definition, a dialectical relationship is simultaneous interdependence and opposition: “A tension or dialogue-like alternation between two conceptions or viewpoints that are simultaneously contradictory and supportive of each other.” (ibid. 52). The notion of dialectics is extremely important throughout the study and helps provide new perspectives of Yaqui cosmology and the Chapayeka as a clown figure. I will show how the different modes of symbolization are both present in the Chapayeka performance, how this creates dialectics and what this means for the dynamics of the ritual.

### **A holistic view of meaning**

In *Symbols That Stand for Themselves* (1986) Wagner proposes a model of meaning as “the constitutive and organizing power in cultural life... The human phenomenon is... organized around the form of perception that we call “meaning.”” Meaning is not something located in abstract and discrete units, but something much more pervasive and unified. Wagner calls for “a



simple and unified unfolding perspective in place of the explanatory mosaic" that traditional views amount to, where "meaning is an effect of signs – abstract codings or functions that can be used to rationalize the whole matter as some sort of epiphenomenal order." Wagner claims that in this view, meaning has become "subordinate to signs." (Wagner 1986: x). The study of meaning has become "a science of signs and their orderings... Such an approach is apt to... reflect inadvertently the conventionalism and rationality of scholarly procedure within the subject of study" (ibid. x). "The Saussurian notion of the "sign" as a sensual mediator between concept and percept... is itself a "sign" of this assumptional framework..." (ibid. 17). Symbols are seen as cryptic and problematic signs to be decoded, with no reality of their own. "[F]or modern Westerners ... symbols... are somehow mysteriously *in front* of things, too elemental for easy or ordinary comprehension" (ibid. 3, emphasis in the original). Meaning, conversely, is looked for behind the symbols. In this view, meaning becomes "an economy of symbols" (ibid. 4). Signs, meanings, and perception have been separated into ontologically different groups. "Perception has... been treated as a kind of natural function... serving as a frontier area of meaning, from which symbolism takes its expressive media, and upon which it imposes... an order and an orientation" (ibid. 17).

Wagner also argues against the idea of perception as natural and art as artificial. Art, poetry, music, and ritual must be "as old, as basic, and as important as language," as they are part of the same condition.

"The difference between ordinary perception and artistic creativity is not that between a naturalistic "sensing" of the world and an artificial, meaningful "interpretation" of that sensing, but rather it is a difference between one kind of meaningful act and another one, of greater concentration, organization, and force, within the same semiotic focus [...] Art is the burning glass of the sun of meaning." (ibid. 27).

The Saussurian framework "establishes *abstraction*... as the single constitutive act in the emergence of meaning" (ibid. 18-19, emphasis in the original). The image is used as the "enabler of abstraction and so disallows the meaningful transformation of images in their own right" (Wagner 1992: 206-207). The emphasis and focus has been on the glosses as abstract meanings and not the symbols themselves as images. Wagner's model starts from a very different premise than most symbolic analysis. "When we speak of meaning, we are talking about "seeing" within the world of human symbols, not about the grammars, syntaxes, or sign functions through which order can be precipitated out of expression" (Wagner 1986: 13). Commitment to the Saussurian concept of sign, where meanings are

referents associated with individual symbols, results in an “abstract, rather than concrete, explication of cultural imagery” (ibid. 131).

This focus on abstraction could be the reason that many symbolic theories make a radical distinction between linguistic and other signs. Once the signs have been separated from each other and the relation to referent is considered arbitrary, linguistic signs seem to offer more specific definitions. Valerio Valeri puts this in the form of a question:

“Is there a purely conventional relation between the signs employed in ritual and the concepts it produces, so that the production of signs would automatically produce the concepts? All this amounts to asking whether ritual meaning is analogous to linguistic meaning.” (Valeri 1985: 340).

However, from another point of view, linguistic meaning is not superior to images in terms of unambiguity:

“The range of potential analogies or glosses (interpretations, what it might mean) evoked by a verbal image or trope... is indefinite, possibly infinite. The only certainty and the only concreteness lie in dealing with the images themselves... A sequence of such images in transformation thus operates by enabling and canceling whole ranges of analytic possibilities. This movement – a calculus, as it were, for possibilities of relationship – forms the indigenous experience of the ritual as a concrete, imagistic power.” (Wagner 1992: 207).

A more holistic view of meaning thus brings image and abstraction together into a dialectic that restricts, orients, and enables the flow of analogy, which relates symbols to each other in an ongoing process of meaning. “Meaning...is a perception *within* what we would call the “value space” set up by symbolic points of reference...It is thus the perception of analogy, and its expansion into larger forms, or frames, of culture takes the form of a “flow” of analogy” (Wagner 1986: 18, emphasis in the original). This flow happens through the dialectic of microcosm, human systems of symbolization, and macrocosm, the perceived world of images. “If macrocosmic forms may be distinguished from the microcosm through their self-signification and broadened sensory range, they may be contrasted with (unmediated) “physical” perception by the fact that they have significance” (ibid. 26). Macrocosmic images are recognized *as* something, but they are not “symbolic” in the sense that they are “real.” “Referential symbolism occupies one pole – that of coding through sensory restriction – of the mediation, and perceptual image or analogy, self-significative symbolism – occupies the other.” (ibid. 24). “The dialectic [between microcosm and macrocosm] is *enabled* by an encompassing

principle of figure-ground reversal, such that each pole of the dialectic is the limiting condition of the other" (ibid. 25, emphasis in the original). "This reversibility amounts to a superordinate principle... by which a perception can be inverted with its perceptual "ground"... referential microcosm and embodied macrocosm can serve alternately as figure and ground to each other" (ibid. 33). Figure – ground reversal, that one or the other can serve as the given, undifferentiated, background against which the figure is defined, is a condition of meaning and part of the nature of dialectic relations. The same principle applies to meaning as action and as perception. Symbolic expression and the interpretation of that expression both happen through the same (reversible) dialectics.

The coding of microcosms, such as language, seems to be universal in cultures. Wagner sees this as

"the condition of human symbolism; a polarity or contrast opposing an artificially restricted symbolic coding to an (equally) artificially expanded iconic imagery... neither is more primary or more "natural" than the other, for both are effects of the same scission, and each realizes its character in contrast to the other." (ibid. 23).

The traditional study of signs focuses on microcosmic terms, and the macrocosmic is seen as the given world that is represented by the world of reference in a kind of code. "The world of phenomena is self-evident and apart." In Wagner's model there is no radical cleft between the symbol and symbolized, they "belong to a single relation, a construction within a larger world, or macrocosm... the symbolized is no less a part of culture than the symbol." (ibid. 14).

Abstraction in this model is not lifted above perception but is "part of a generative and ongoing process" (ibid. 19). The microcosm and macrocosm also form a dialectic of relative abstraction and concretization. "The invention of a microcosm by abstraction from a perceptual macrocosm is half of a highly charged dialectical interaction, establishing a sensory continuum within which the ordering and refiguring of meaning is accomplished." The other half is the concretization of microcosm into macrocosm of embodied meanings. (ibid. 19). The same thing can be microcosm or macrocosm depending on the relative situation. For example, language can be considered a referential microcosm, but it can also be considered the embodied macrocosm of thought (ibid. 136). The macrocosm as relatively more concrete is also objectified as the given context, "reality."

The Yaqui Easter ritual itself can be seen as a sensible macrocosm of abstract cosmological principles, but it is also a coded symbolic microcosm of the powers in the larger macrocosm. This way the ritual is a way to not

only experience those powers, but also to create and represent them. The microcosmic and macrocosmic poles are points of mediation between each other, as well as the established and shared conventions and individual and differentiated entities outside the dialectic. The Yaquis themselves are part of these dialectics.

“Symbolic ... points of reference thus mediate between the ... social collectivity and perceptual image, simultaneously providing a sensory medium for the coding of referential “invariance” and conventional reference points for the orientation and recognition of images. Perceptual images, or analogies, mediate between the individuating, factual world and symbolic reference, incidentalizing the referential as self-signification, and referencing the incidental as perception through a symbolic value space.” (ibid. 24-25).

This dialectic means that macrocosmic phenomena can be recognized as meaningful, and that conventional meanings can be applied to those phenomena. Absolute convention and absolute differentiation are equally impossible to achieve, but they are set up as points of reference that make meaning and expression possible. “The dialectic... marks a range within which expressions, images etc “innovate upon one another as relatively collectivizing or differentiating.” (ibid. 25 emphasis deleted). “The collective aspect identified is with the moral, or ethical mode of culture, standing in a dialectical relation to that of the factual” (Wagner 1981: xiv). The Easter ritual as a trope is a dialectic that mediates between the conventions of Yaqui culture and the larger world of both cosmological and earthly powers. This, and the part of the Chapayeka in it, go further in explaining how the ritual is an important part of the continuity of Yaqui culture.

### **Tropes and the relativity of meaning**

A trope is not only a (relative) ‘unit’ of meaning, but also provides a model of how meaning is organized as a general phenomenon.

“[A]s metaphor, metonym, or whatnot, [a trope] elicits meaning. But as long as the elicitation is a function of local, or epigrammatic expressions alone, rather than an overall, organizing effect, culture becomes a fabric of tropes stitched together by conventional “structure,” categories, and other conventional devices. If we are to come to terms with the implications of meaning for culture as a phenomenon, then, it is necessary to show how trope itself can operate as an organizing principle.” (ibid. x).

It is not enough, then, to interpret tropes as separate metaphors, but to see how tropes are formed against each other, and how the principle of trope organizes meaning on different levels. "A metaphor, and, by extension, a trope generally, equates one conventional point of reference with another, or substitutes one for another, and obliges the interpreter to draw his or her conclusions as to the consequences" (ibid. 7). Drawing these conclusions, however, is not necessarily simple. "A single metaphor... invariably presents the enigma of what Freud called condensation – a richness of potentially elicited analogies" (ibid. 29). How to draw conclusions, then, and choose between possible analogies? The answer lies partly in considering the metaphor in relation to other metaphors as well as at the internal organization of the metaphor. (ibid. 30). The Yaqui Easter ritual is meaningful as a whole through its internal relations and the points of reference it creates, but also through its relation to external points of reference, such as the figures represented in Chapayeka masks. In any case, it is the relations between the points that create meaning, not individual or independent points considered as signs, each interpreted separately. The extensions and transformations of tropes can be illustrated through a process Wagner calls obviation, which shows the motivations and movements of tropes being formed against each other. Obviation in a myth or ritual is the successive substitution of one metaphor with another (ibid. xi). An analysis of the Easter ritual as an obviation sequence brings out the meaning of the conventional aspect of the Chapayeka performance and how the relations of the different beings and aspects of Yaqui cosmology are related to each other.

The process of a trope being obviated is also a sequence of revelations, a "knowledge process" (ibid. 10). The points of obviation, as mediations, are also points of dialectical reversal (ibid. 33). They are changes in perception, as well as changes in the perceived (ibid. 41). "It is not simply a mediation of oppositions that constitutes the ritual, but rather a reciprocal mediative movement among concrete images, each of which condenses a range of oppositional potentials..." (Wagner 1992: 209).

"[T]rope or metaphor, the self-referential coordinate, is relativity compounded; it introduces relativity within coordinate systems, and within culture" (Wagner 1986: 5). Symbolic expression is not indicating or referring to things, it is the making of relations between reference points that are innovative on earlier relations. The new relation impinges on conventional reference, "this impingement is simultaneously what it is, and what it is about." (ibid. 6, emphasis in the original).

"A culture compounded of relative meanings cannot be a system of oppositions... for relativity implies a move to new coordinates that denies, or negates, the original ones... Culture is but analogy

based on (and subversive to) other analogies, not in a tension of rigid oppositions or categories, but a mobile range of transformations worked upon a conventional core... [which] is itself a kind of residue, "conventional" only because some particular set, or combination, of its analogic associations has been identified as the most literal, or common – a definitional "absolute."" (ibid. 7).

This, the mediation of convention, is what stops meaning from being completely relative: "the illusion that some associations of the symbolic element are primary" (Wagner 1981: 39). This, as an absolute, is "a kind of epistemological "lie," which is just as necessary for meaning as invention is (Wagner 1986 24). These kinds of "absolutes," such as the grammar of a language, provide a frame of conventional reference for expressions, such as the words of that language, which are "taken in the context... of the larger, framing metaphor" (ibid. 7). These ostensibly absolute frames are in fact relative to the less conventional figures they provide a context to. "[L]esser figures are formed within and against the larger, framing ones, and eventually become encapsulated by them, only to facilitate the formation of yet other, lesser expressions." (ibid. 8). Meanings are processes, not properties. Obviation gives form to and is formed by the flow of analogy, created by the sequences of tropes.

### **Structure of the study**

The chapters of the study fall into three parts: 1) historical and cultural context of the Yaqui Easter ritual, 2) description and analysis of the ritual with an emphasis on the Chapayeka performance and 3) a re-evaluation of previous analyses and the implications of my study. All chapters combine ethnographic description with analysis, but chapters three and four weigh more on the descriptive side.

The first three chapters give background information of Yaqui history, culture, and religion. I will first present a brief history and description of the current situation of the Yaquis, and discuss my field site. This chapter places the Yaquis in the historical context of New Spain and later Mexico, and through the analysis of myths, discusses how that history has been portrayed in certain Yaqui conventions. The Spanish invaders and Jesuit missionaries met the Yaquis from their own conventions. In the exchanges that ensued new conventions were invented and foreign ones were reinvented according to pre-existing ones. Today the continuity of Yaqui culture is emicly associated with the continuity of those conventions. The next chapter gives a general picture of Yaqui cosmology, the places and beings it encompasses, and ways of participating in ritual, mediated by membership in ceremonial societies. The ceremonial societies are associated

with different realms, deities, and powers. The Easter ritual brings all of them together. In the third chapter I describe the Chapayekas, their appearance, action, as well as the different types of beings portrayed in the masks.

Chapters four through six offer a description and analysis of the Easter ritual and the part of the Chapayeka in it. In the fourth chapter I describe the Easter ritual as I witnessed it, and go on to analyse the ritual and the Chapayekas' part in it. First I discuss the conventional side of the Easter ritual and how the cycle of death and rebirth of the Chapayekas provides a symmetrical counterpart to that of Jesus. This way the conventional side of the Chapayeka performance is an important aspect of the ritual as a trope of the cosmology. The next chapter is about invention in the Chapayeka performance. I discuss when and how it happens and what are some of the tropes created in improvisation. As different modes of symbolization, the different kinds of performance have different relations to context. The periodic reversals enhance the power of the chapayekas and conversely rejuvenate the entire ritual.

In the seventh and final chapter I expand the argument to include other studies and other clowns. I discuss how the previous analyses of the Chapayekas have been affected by different views on meaning, and how the material and analysis of the Chapayekas can be applied to other clowns and studies on them. I illustrate the different approaches by considering the Chapayekas', scholars', and other clowns' portrayals of good and evil and how these are conceptualized in different logics of symbolization. The Chapayekas have often been interpreted as representations of evil. I argue that firstly, the Chapayekas are not straightforwardly evil, and secondly, good and evil are seen very differently in Yaqui cosmology from the way this has been portrayed in the analyses. Finally I ask, what can the material and analysis of the Chapayeka say about other clowns and tricksters? There are differences between clown and trickster figures, but I argue that they share the switching back and forth between conventionalizing and differentiating, and that taking this into account can open up new perspectives.

### **Analyzing ritual**

Although the vision that is entailed in Wagner's theoretical models is quite different from most anthropological study of ritual, my study fits in with some more recent views that emphasize ritual and other symbolic expressions as something "in their own right" and criticize approaches that reduce the meaning of ritual to its social functions or ability to represent aspects of non-ritual society. These views call attention to the agency and efficacy of ritual and hold that the study should start with the ritual itself and that its relation to other aspects of society and culture is a matter to be

discovered and not assumed (Handelman 2004, Kapferer 2004 and Kapferer and Hobart 2005). Bruce Kapferer and Angela Hobart introduce an edited volume *Aesthetics in Performance* (2005) by saying that we should consider

“...art (and the symbolic generally) as potentially both an in itself and a for itself, a process that has the capacity to make real that which it constructs. As a consequence art and other symbolic constructions do not merely represent externalities but act as moments of rupture and of reconstruction or reconceptualization, changing and transforming the worlds in which they are produced.” (2005: 8).

This also means that the relation of ritual to its context cannot be taken for granted. Symbolic forms are not of course ahistorical or to be considered without context, but whatever intrinsic potency and efficacy they possess should be taken into account and not be assumed to come from outside the ritual. (ibid. 8). As a methodological choice, focusing on the aesthetic form itself makes possible to discover

“...through the exploration of symbolic artifacts and processes the way they articulate in their own terms with a political and social environment. In addition the aesthetic formation or symbolic process explored in itself may provide original understanding of the world in which it is already embedded.” (ibid. 9).

In the introduction to the edited volume *Ritual in Its Own Right* (2004) Don Handelman criticizes the ideas that ritual exists because it has a social function, represents something else, or provides an arena for competition and conflict that has its roots elsewhere in society (Handelman 2004: 1-2).

“Ritual is perceived [as] and made into a storehouse of symbols and scripts originating in the world outside ritual, activated within ritual in prescribed ways on predicated occasions, in order to inform and to somatize participants with appropriate meanings and feelings related directly to their cultural worlds outside ritual” (ibid. 2).

Handelman says there are three received ways to study of ritual in anthropology which lead to ritual being seen as an epiphenomenon of culture: ritual is studied as

“a model of and model for cultural worlds, yet never ritual in itself and for itself, but always ritual as representation – the hegemonic modality for the study of rite in anthropology... a second.... modality... is ritual understood as functional of and functional for social order...A third modality... is ritual



understood as yet another arena for the playing out of social, economic and political competition and conflict." (ibid. 2).

"Much work on ritual is chiefly concerned with the relation between rite and its larger political and social context." (Kapferer 2004: 43). Leaving the analysis at that is not enough, as ritual considered as function or representation takes away its agency (Handelman 2004: 5). Instead, anthropologists should consider what ritual is "in relation to itself, how it is put together and organized within itself" (ibid. 2). Like Kapferer and Hobart, Handelman notes that the relation of ritual to other aspects of culture and society is not a matter of a priori theory: "...what particular rituals are about, what they are organized to do, how they accomplish what they do, are all empirical questions whose primary locus of inquiry is initially within the rituals themselves." Ritual does not exist independently of its context, but it is capable of having a somewhat autonomous existence. The degree of autonomy is determined by the ritual itself and the actions it permits. (ibid. 3). In his article in the same volume, Kapferer notes that the relative autonomy of the rite creates a disjunction, which is a source of power, and that ritual may alter, change or transform the existential circumstances of persons in nonritual realities (Kapferer 2004: 45-47).

Ritual dynamics "achieve their most intense concentration" and constitute "a field of force" in what Kapferer calls the virtual of ritual, which is "...a throughgoing reality of its own, neither a simulacrum of realities external to ritual nor an alternative reality" (ibid. 37). Rite as virtual is different from what Kapferer calls actuality in two ways. Firstly it is "a kind of phantasmagoric space... a dynamic that allows for all kinds of potentialities of human experience to take shape and form" (ibid. 47). It has constructive agency. Rite as virtual is real, but in its own terms. Secondly, while actuality is chaotic, virtuality is less so. Virtuality makes it possible to adjust life by holding the chaos at bay. (ibid. 48). "[T]he virtual of rite is a means for engaging immediately with the very ontological ground of being" (ibid. 49). Kapferer also notes that "...a shift to viewing ritual as a dynamic" means seeing it as a place "for the production of meaning rather than seeing it as necessarily predominantly meaningful in itself..." (ibid. 50).

Kapferer also notes that the theoretical legacy of Victor Turner provides "the main route, within anthropology, for a discussion of ritual dynamics that is grounded in the phenomenon of ritual action itself. Most anthropologists have applied theoretical perspectives that have not been grounded in the observation of rite but in nonritual action." (ibid. 39). According to Kapferer, Turner saw ritual practices

"as themselves already including their theoretical possibility. This possibility was not about ritual per se but rather derived from the

close analysis of ritual that led to a larger understanding of human being as a whole, that is, as a continuing and endlessly diversifying and differentiating entity in culture and in history.” (ibid. 38).

Wagner’s theoretical model provides an excellent way to study ritual as a dynamic entity in its own right. Looking at meaning as a holistic phenomenon and ritual as a trope makes it possible to appreciate both the internal organization of a ritual and its relation to context. The Easter ritual is a very powerful part of Yaqui culture, and not least because of the clowns. Like ritual, humor is not just a code to be deciphered; it is a way to create meaning and agency that has potential to transform the grounds of perception and being.



Figure 1. Map of significant places in Yaqui history. The Yaqui lands are located within the area indicated by the rectangle.

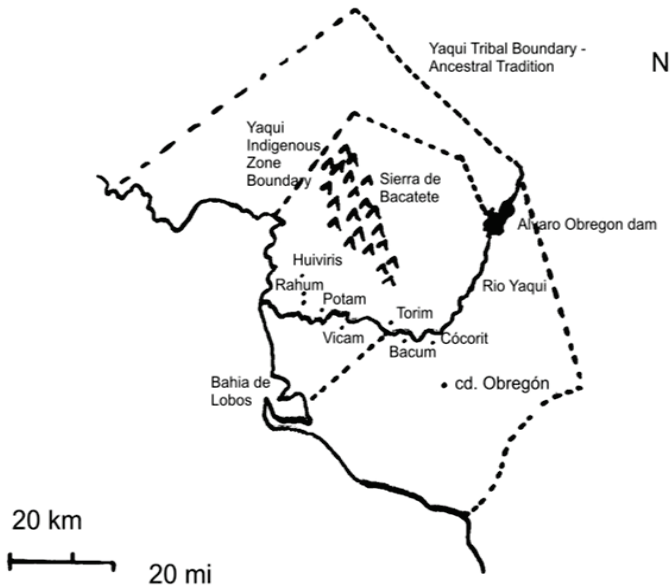


Figure 2. Map of Yaqui Territory (Source map Erickson 2008: 9). The larger area delimited by a dotted line shows the boundary of Yaqui territory according to ancestral tradition. The territory as it is today is smaller, bounded in part by the Yaqui river.

## Chapter 1

### History and the Present: Becoming and Staying Yaqui

The history of the Yaquis has been so turbulent and violent at times that it is remarkable that they continue to exist at all. Furthermore, they never gave up the struggle to hold on to their lands, traditions and independence. They have survived “against all odds” (Lutes 1983: 82). The Yaquis have been known as a distinct group since before the conquest, but the coming of the Spaniards to Mexico was the beginning point of a new world, where the means and meanings of being Yaqui changed. The disjuncture between the old and the new world is also represented in the Yaqui origin myth of the Talking Tree. The myth tells how the *Surem*, mythical ancestors of the Yaquis, were split into two groups after hearing the prophecy of the conquest. Some went into the wilderness and became part of a different realm; others accepted the prophecy and chose to become the Yaquis of this world. In the times from the conquest of Mexico, in the Jesuit mission 1617-1767, and in independent Mexico, the Yaquis have balanced and struggled between resistance and acceptance, autonomy and being dominated. The Yaquis see themselves as “the never conquered tribe” and indeed, attempts to force them into submission have never succeeded. Moctezuma Zamarrón (2007: 29-30) notes that as an indigenous group the Yaquis are set apart by the way they combine tradition and modernity, their ability to maintain a dialogue with the global society, and that their ability to adapt to the “outside world” creates a contrast to their strong sense of identity. Their flexibility and ability to combine change and continuity, as well as readiness to defend themselves, have been the most important aspects of the continuity of the Yaquis as a distinct group with a distinct culture.

Today, there are Yaqui communities both in the U.S. and Sonora. The number of Yaquis in Mexico according to the national census of 2000 is 23 411 (Moctezuma Zamarrón 2007: 56). The number of Yaquis in the US according to the US census of 2000 was 15 632 (US census bureau). There is no unproblematic way of deciding who counts as Yaqui. For example, the Mexican census uses language as a basis for selection, yet there are individuals who do not speak the Yaqui language but claim Yaqui ancestry and may participate in the rituals. In the US, ethnicity is determined by “blood” ([www.pascuaYaqui-nsn.gov](http://www.pascuaYaqui-nsn.gov)). However, the important point is that there are quite large numbers of individuals, communities, and traditions that are considered Yaqui, whether or not these elements coincide neatly or not. The

Yaquis continue to negotiate the elements and boundaries of group and culture, and the ownership and use of resources. The elements that are seen to systematically provide continuity of Yaquis as a distinct group with a distinct culture are generally considered to be traditional rituals, language, and residence in and control over Yaqui lands. The latter has been a matter of struggle, and this struggle itself is also an important part of Yaqui identity. The rituals, and very importantly the clowns, are a way of creating, expressing, and maintaining meanings and drawing and mediating boundaries.

The history of the Yaquis is closely connected to the land. The land has been – and continues to be – home, the source of life, a coveted resource, the setting for various events both mythical and concrete, and a symbol of autonomy and identity. The Yaquis have defended their land many times, lost and regained it. Throughout the events that have happened after the conquest, the Yaquis have taken a very active part in the shaping of their history, fighting many battles and making many sacrifices, but also through negotiations and compromises. They have combined resistance and compromise, and consequently they have survived as a distinct and respected group. Edward Spicer calls the Yaquis “an enduring people” (Spicer 1980: 333). Among the groups in the area, the Yaquis are said to hold on to their traditions more than others. The Yaquis themselves say they have never been conquered. Unlike many other indigenous peoples of Mexico, the Yaquis have never been simply forced into submission. They have resisted all forceful attempts to control the land or the people, and have often been successful in negotiating the terms of their position.

The known history of the Yaquis can be divided into three phases: pre-Hispanic times, the conquest of Mexico and missionising by Jesuits, and the period after the missionaries left to the present. Each period has meant a different way of life. Today, the Yaquis have reclaimed their ancient lands in Mexico and have autonomy in their territory. There are also communities in other parts of Sonora and some settlements in the U.S., including a reservation near Tucson in Arizona.

### **Before the Conquest and first encounters with the Spanish**

At the time of the Spanish conquest, there were over 100 indigenous groups in the northwestern New Spain. The estimated total number of inhabitants was 540,000. (Hu-De Hart 1981: 8). Only a few of these groups are in existence today. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the Spanish arrived, the Yaquis were already a distinct group, with their own language and territory. In total there were about 30,000 Yaquis who lived near the Yaqui River in *rancherías*,

fairly autonomous groups of a few families. The Yaquis were mostly agriculturalists, who could resort to hunting and gathering when needed. Little is known of their indigenous religion or ritual. (ibid. 1,12; Spicer 1980: 5). There was no central government, but the smaller groups would unite to protect their hunting and gathering grounds against the advances of the neighboring groups, such as the Seris, Pimas and Mayos. Moctezuma Zamarrón proposes that while there were leaders at times of war, they had no office in times of peace. (Moctezuma Zamarrón 2007: 25). The Yaqui language is a part of the Uto-Aztec group. Other groups in the area, such as the neighboring Mayos, speak related languages. The language is also related to Nahuatl, spoken by the Aztecs. This has raised the question of a connection to Mesoamerica. Other elements that support this are certain myths, and the symbolic importance of flowers. On the other hand, the Yaquis, as other groups in the area, lack other characteristic objects of Mesoamerica such as written calendars. (Olavarria 2003: 36-37).

Although resistance against the Spanish wasn't uncommon among Mexico's indigenous groups, "the Yaquis stand out for having waged the most determined, enduring, and successful war against involuntary absorption into the dominant culture or integration with the larger society" (Hu de Hart. 1981: 3). The readiness to defend themselves was clear from the beginning. In 1533 a Spanish expedition came to Yaqui country and was met by a band of Yaqui warriors. With them was an old Yaqui man, who drew a line on the ground. After some attempts at negotiations, there was battle, and the Spanish, unable to cross the line into Yaqui territory, were driven away. According to Spanish reports of the battle, the Yaquis "showed the greatest fighting ability of any natives of New Spain" (Spicer 1980: 5). The Yaquis were left alone for the time being. In 1565 the Spaniards again ventured to the northwest, and this time the Yaquis gave them a lavish reception. The apparent reason for the changed attitude was that the Yaquis were planning to attack the neighboring Mayo Indians, and wanted the Spanish as their allies. However, the Spaniards left again, and did not come as far north until the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. (Hu-De Hart 1981: 18-20). At this time New Spain had split into two zones: the northern indigenous population, including the Yaquis, were still free of a permanent Spanish presence, while to the south of the Fuerte River most of the population had been colonized and the communities had begun to disintegrate. The Spanish wanted the north, where they knew the land was rich and hoped to find gold mines, but they had realized that the procedures that had worked in the south wouldn't be as effective in the north, and so they turned to missionaries to help open the northern frontier. (ibid. 20-21).

The Yaquis had been left in peace for a long time. This was partly because of their known ability to defend themselves, and partly because the difficult terrain made their land easier to defend. However, the conquest moved further north. Missions were set in the lands of neighboring peoples. Finally the Yaquis themselves made the first move and started negotiations to have the Jesuits enter the Yaqui territory. (Spicer 1980: 17). Although the Yaquis had waged war against other groups before, the conquest meant a different kind of distinction between ethnic groups in the overall political system of power. Indigenous as opposed to Spanish became an important distinction. The Yaqui origin myth marks the rupture caused by the coming of the Spanish as the beginning of the Yaquis.

### **Becoming Yaqui: the myth of the Talking Tree**

The Talking Tree is perhaps the Yaqui myth most commonly quoted and written about. (see Erickson 2003 and 2008, Evers and Molina 1987, Giddings 1959, Painter 1986, Sands 1983). It tells the story of the separation of the Yaquis from their ancestors, the Surem, but it is also a story of how the cosmology is separated into different realms, with different powers. The Talking Tree tells of the time before the conquest and before the Yaquis came into existence. There is a tree (in some versions a stick) that hums or sings, but nobody can understand its message. A young woman called Yomumuli is found who is the only one who understands the tree. She says the tree tells of great changes that are coming, the conquest and baptism. Those who do not like the idea of the new future, remain the Surem, the small ancestors, who populate the *monte*, the wilderness, where they still exist and can affect the lives of the Yaquis. In some versions they turn into insects, fish, and other small animals. In one version of the myth, Yomumuli herself decides to leave after the prophecy:

"I am going north," she said. And she took this river, rolled it up, put it under her arm, and walked away on the clouds toward the north... Only a few people liked what the stick predicted and these waited. These men are the Yaquis. They grew to be taller than the Surem who had gone away. The Surem were little people, but very strong. They still live in the hills and the sea. They favor man and help him when they can. Some, in the sea, are like sirens and live on islands. Others are whales who come near to a boat to warn it when it is in danger. All of the Surem are wild pagans. If a Yaqui is lost in the monte, these little people help him by bringing him food and fire, and then they go away. Some say the Surem are very rich and have many cattle under the hills." (Giddings 1959: 25).

The Talking Tree reflects a break between the pre-Hispanic past and the time after the conquest. It portrays the Yaquis as coming into being through the conquest; they choose to accept the changes and take an active part in the process. The Surem, although they retire to a different realm, do not disappear. They continue to have an influence. There are still stories in Cócorit told of gold treasures that can be found in the monte. One must be careful, however, as the gold is enchanted and may disappear if the finder makes a mistake. There are also stories of small objects found in the monte that are belongings of the Surem (Erickson 2008: 27). Although the Surem rejected Christianity, this is not represented as negative or evil. They may come to help people in times of danger. Their choice to reject the new world and new religion is not represented as evil. Conversely, becoming Yaqui, mortal and baptised, does not mean a person has to fear or avoid the Surem. The Surem are, however, part of a different realm, and contact with them can only be made under specific circumstances.

The myth of the Talking Tree has been interpreted as a dynamic and flexible representation of Yaqui identity and history. "This narrative accords the Yaquis a level of agency that ordinary histories do not, refiguring them as informed actors in the determination of their own destiny." (Erickson 2003: 465; see also Sands 1983). This is certainly in accordance with the way the Yaquis have acted and represented themselves through their history, showing flexibility and acceptance of change, as well as courage and a willingness to defend themselves in war. The events of the talking tree meant a reorganization of the world, a separation of the different realms, times and beings. At the same time it should be noted that the new realm did not totally replace the old one. The realms, and the beings and powers that reside in them, continue to exist side by side.

### **Yaquis in the Jesuit mission**

The Jesuits were with the Yaquis from 1617 to 1767. The missionaries brought with them a new social order, new economic system, and a new religion. They rearranged the Yaquis within in their territory, founded the "eight original towns" and changed the systems of production to work as a part of the mission project. It appears that the Jesuits intended to control everything and to implement Christianity as they saw fit. However, at the ratio of a few missionaries to thousands of Yaquis, they could scarcely reach very high levels of control.

The Jesuits were founded in 1534 by Ignatius Loyola for the purpose of converting non-European peoples to Christianity. When they came to New



Spain in 1572, the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians were already there. The difference between the Jesuits and other missionary orders in the area was that the Jesuits, instead of answering to the king of Spain, answered to the general of their order in Rome and to the Pope. This would later be the source of some of the conflict between the Jesuits and the imperial authorities, finally resulting in the expulsion of the Jesuits from New Spain. (Hu deHart 1981: 22-23).

In 1587 the Jesuits were given permission by Spain to go to the as of yet unpacified northwest, where the Yaquis were. As they moved northward, the Jesuits were establishing a pattern which went beyond religious conversion. The Jesuits had “phenomenal success in reorganising almost all the indigenous nations of the northwest [which enabled them] to extend their hegemony over northwestern society in general (ibid. 23)” The original plan of ten year periods for conversion followed by integration into secular colonial society was thought to be insufficient for the “less developed” northwest. Instead the Jesuits wanted to establish permanent missions, where the missionaries would control every aspect of the communities. By economic reorganization they were able to produce a surplus, which enabled them to establish more missions further north. (ibid. 22-24).

At the time the Jesuits were nearing the Yaquis, there had been more fighting between the Spanish and the Yaquis. The Yaquis gained several military victories over the Spanish troops. In an attempt to get the Yaquis to agree to peace the Spanish circulated rumors of a planned military invasion by the colonial government. On April 25 in 1610 the Yaquis signed a peace treaty with the Spanish in San Felipe. The Jesuits took this opportunity to praise the visitors, give them gifts and invite several youths to attend the missionary school in Culiacán. It was hoped that the missionising and conversion of the Yaquis would provide peace in the future. (ibid. 26-29). After military victories over the Spanish, the Yaquis were in a position to negotiate the terms on which the missionaries entered their territory. Spicer interprets the Yaquis' actions as the results of interest in the new things brought into their world by the Europeans, rather than fear of their power. The Yaquis had seen established Jesuit missions, and, according to Spicer, made a distinction between them and the more destructive Spaniards, which could explain their willingness to accept the presence of the missionaries. There are no records of the discussions between the Yaqui delegation and the Spanish except that they lasted hours. The fact remains that the Spanish made an effort to respond to the Yaquis' wishes. General Hurdaide had previously made several futile attempts to conquer the Yaquis by military force, but his next entry into Yaqui territory

was very different from the time before, accompanied only by a small group of soldiers. When later on he was ambushed by Yaquis who shot arrows at him, Hurdaide chose to ignore this incident rather than attempt a forceful suppression of the demonstrated hostility. From the beginning of their relations with the European invaders the Yaquis took an active part in shaping these relations, the essential feature of which was "give-and-take on the part of both Europeans and Yaquis." (Spicer 1980: 15-16).

On May 17, 1617 two missionaries entered Yaqui territory – without the customary escort of Spanish soldiers. On their entry in each of the *rancherías* the senior of the missionaries, father Pérez de Ribas first explained their purpose, and then delivered a short sermon, after which all the children under the age of seven were baptized. In these baptisms, Christianized Suaquis (an indigenous group from the same area) stood as godfathers. Not all the Yaquis were accepting of the missionary presence, though; there were three attempts to murder the two missionaries. The missionaries blamed indigenous Yaqui ritual specialists for the signs of resistance and made a priority of undermining their power and prestige. In their work to replace the Yaqui religion with Christianity the missionaries were assisted by Suaquis and later Yaquis educated at the San Felipe college for Jesuits. (Hu DeHart 1981: 30-32).

The Jesuits brought in large amounts of food from established mission sites to entice the Yaquis to leave their *rancherías* and relocate to the eleven settlements along the river as planned by the missionaries. At this time the building of churches was also started. The eleven settlements eventually became eight, Cócorit, Bacum, Torim, Vicam, Potam, Rahum, Huiviris, and Belem, known as "the eight original towns" which are still in existence in the same area today, although the location of some has changed somewhat. (ibid. 32-33).

By 1623, nearly all of the 30,000 Yaquis were reported to have been baptized. Although the Yaquis seem to have embraced Catholicism quickly, Spicer argues that from the very beginning, the Yaquis were making the new religion their own. Since there were only about four or five missionaries in the Yaqui mission, much of the religious program would have been filtered through a Yaqui network, "bringing about a constant adaptation to Yaqui needs and understandings" (Spicer 1980: 19). Partly this Yaqui network was created and controlled by the Jesuits, as they chose Yaquis to assist them in keeping civil and religious order. They also created a set of religious officials to assist in the church. These *fiscals de iglesia* functioned as spies for the missionaries, reporting on anybody who wasn't following the proper rules of attending mass and abiding by the missionaries' law. In the missions the Jesuits set themselves

up as the ultimate authority. (Hu DeHart 1981: 34-35). Despite the apparent control of the Jesuits, the Yaquis had shown before, and would show again, an independence and readiness for battle that makes it hard to believe that four or five missionaries could maintain control over 30, 000 Yaquis without their cooperation (Spicer 1980: 16, 21).

The main aim of the Jesuits wasn't secularization and integration of the indigenous population for the benefit of the larger New Spain society, they wanted to evangelize and further their own project. For this purpose they aimed to keep their missions isolated from the rest of the Spanish. By this isolation and by making the mission economically productive, the Jesuits were able to carry on with their effort and extend the conversion to other indigenous groups in the area. Actually being missionized contributed to the survival of the Yaquis in colonial and post-colonial Mexico. An organized and isolated mission "gave [to the Yaquis] a more precise definition of their territorial boundaries, a stronger sense of cultural unity, and a greater degree of economic security." Perhaps more importantly, being missionized also made them legitimate in the eyes of the system of New Spain. (Hu DeHart 1981: 3; see also Spicer 1980: 13).

The Yaquis, however, weren't content to let the Jesuits define all aspects of their existence. Beginning in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Yaquis, mostly young males, began to go to the northern mines for temporary work. The Spanish miners and landowners wanted access to the labor available in the missions, which set them against the missionaries. This conflict, as well as that between the Yaquis and the Jesuits, was one of the factors that lead to what is called the Yaqui rebellion in 1740. Another factor were floods which resulted in famine in the mission. The Jesuits blamed the Yaqui uprising on Spanish conspiracy, although at this time there were Yaqui leaders outside the Jesuits' system of command. After the rebellion more Yaquis went to work in the mines, but they still returned to the mission periodically, and all Yaqui men were never absent from the mission at the same time. At this time they also had to protect the mission against attacks from other indigenous groups. For this the Yaquis worked with local military authorities, which further undermined Jesuit authority. Between different groups with conflicting interests, the Yaquis relied on their own efforts to balance their two priorities of working in the mines and protecting their pueblos. This is again one of the demonstrations of Yaqui flexibility, which has enabled them to negotiate their fate from the time of the Jesuits to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Hu-DeHart 1981: 5-6).

### **After the Jesuits and independent Mexico**

In 1767 the king of Spain expelled the Jesuits from the New Spain and the rest of Spanish America, took the wealth they had allegedly accumulated, and reasserted the Monarchy as the primary authority in the Indian territories. The Jesuits were to be replaced by secular priests, and the Indian territories were to be secularized and integrated into the developing New Spanish society. No longer protected by the mission, the Yaquis now had to defend their lands against the landowners and miners. At the same time, as for the Yaquis this was the culmination of diminishing Jesuit influence, the sudden absence of the missionaries did not produce as much disorder as in other parts of the Spanish empire. (ibid. 58). Since providing labor for the mines was a viable option, the Yaquis were not solely dependent on the mission (ibid. 96). After the Jesuits left, the Yaquis “maintained a vigorous cultural life and economic self-sufficiency.” Since they provided their labor voluntarily, they “forestalled implementation of other reforms designed for their total integration into secular society.” (ibid. 59). The Yaquis were able to provide a compromise of making their labor available while insisting on a separate culture and political autonomy. This compromise allowed them to exist in an environment controlled by the Spanish without disappearing into it as many indigenous peoples had done. (ibid. 103).

In 1769 the Jesuit missions that had not been taken over by the Franciscans were to be politically and socially reorganized. The lands were to be divided and assigned to both Spanish and indigenous owners. The lands were to be granted permanently by the crown and the indigenous peoples were to be incorporated into a tribute system. The land that was not to be given to the indigenous was to be sold to Spaniards “of good moral character with sincere intentions to settle down” (ibid. 98). These intended reforms never took place, because of noncompliance by the Yaquis as well as natural causes: the Yaquis traveled between the mission and the mines, creating a demographic instability, the land near the river was changeable due to yearly flooding, and the Yaquis simply wouldn’t pay tribute. Very few Spanish moved permanently into Yaqui territory at this time. (ibid. 99, 101)

While the Yaquis traveled to work in the mines, they always came back to the pueblos, and a part of the men were always present (ibid. 100). This pattern of traveling for work and returning periodically persisted throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Returning to the home village for important celebrations was a common pattern. (Spicer 1940: 29). This is still going on today: Yaquis “travel far and wide across the North American continent... Although the duration of these stays outside the Yaqui territory varies, in many cases there are lasting

ties, and the emigrants return occasionally, cyclically or permanently to their original communities (Moctezuma Zamarrón 2007: 25, my translation).

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish military dominance declined. The Spanish soldiers lost prestige and the Spanish governors were unable to control their areas. (Spicer 1980: 123). Between the Yaquis and the Spanish the dominance shifted in favor of the Yaquis. The Yaquis were recognized as politically prominent by the indigenous groups in the area as well as the Spaniards. At this time they were the biggest tribe, numbering some 50,000, they knew how the Spanish system worked, many of them had learned to speak Spanish, and they still had a reputation as the fiercest of Indian warriors, overshadowed only by the Apaches. (ibid. 125, 128).

For the duration of the colonial period the Yaquis lived peacefully, cooperating with the Spanish by providing labor and maintaining their separate autonomous existence in the pueblos (Hu-DeHart 1981: 102). With the independence of Mexico the situation changed and the Yaquis were no longer able to maintain that balance. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Yaqui land came to be as valuable as Yaqui labor had been. After Mexico's independence from Spain wars started again between the Yaquis and the *Yoris* (ibid. 7). Yori is a term for white men, non-Indians. Today it is sometimes used to mean Mexicans, as opposed to Yaquis.

The Mexican war of independence began in 1810, and independence was achieved in 1821. This meant battles and political reorganization for the whole area. In 1824 the governor of the new state wanted to survey Yaqui land for the purposes of taxation and setting up new government. The Yaquis protested, the state government sent in soldiers and in 1825 the battles started again. As the threat of losing it grew, the Yaquis began to consider their land as "ancient divinely given heritage more and more sacred." (Spicer 1980: 119). Now the indigenous people were developing a concept of being united and "independent of any political entities which might be set up by the native-born descendants of Europeans." The Yaquis provided the leadership for this. Broken by some periods of Mexican dominance, the battles went on for several years. (ibid. 130-131). From 1858 to 1909 the majority of Yaquis were involved in different ways in supporting a military action against the Mexicans (ibid. 153). As the conflict over politics and land grew, the brutalities escalated. In 1868 Yaqui prisoners, 450 men, women, and children were locked in a church overnight. After a disturbance the church was set on fire. The Mexicans shot at the door as people tried to get out. (ibid. 144).

The soldiers were able to contain the Yaquis for a few years, but in 1875 fighting broke out again. There was battle over the next years; in the last

decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Mexicans felt they had won. Yaqui land was redistributed, only some of it given to Yaquis. The redistribution also meant colonies of foreigners, and a permanent federal occupation force. At this time some Yaquis worked on the land, while some stayed in the mountains as guerilla fighters. The ones working on the land helped support the fighters. As the guerilla efforts intensified, so did the response by the Mexicans. In 1896, there were negotiations for peace: the Yaquis had to accept the president of Mexico as the highest governmental power, and the troops would leave the Yaqui country. Peace ensued but did not last: soon there was restlessness; the Yaquis felt nothing had changed, and the situation reverted back to war. Eventually the Yaqui guerilla organization was scattered. The last recorded battle took place in 1904. A note sent by surrounded Yaquis before their defeat to the enemy commander shows what they wanted: they would surrender, and recognize the Mexican government if all the Yoris would leave Yaqui territory and the local Yaqui governments would be allowed to operate again. (ibid. 152-153).

### **Yaqui diaspora and the recognition of landrights in Sonora**

The Mexican government was unrelenting: by 1910 Yaqui society had finally been atomized and the dispersal of the Yaquis was at its height. Yaquis were scattered from the Yucatán to Southern California, making them the most dispersed Native North American people. Spicer calls this period the Yaqui diaspora. (ibid. 158). Social structure was torn apart. Many Yaquis were deported, forced to work on the land in Sonora, central Mexico, or on plantations in Yucatán, where many died in the brutal conditions. Because being identified as Yaqui was enough cause for deportation, Yaquis changed their names, first from Yaqui to Spanish names which were later exchanged for different Spanish names, often several times. (ibid. 158, 160). Ceremonial practices were largely abandoned for fear of being identified as Yaquis. Sometimes ceremonies or parts of them were held in secret. When it was considered safe, the ceremonies were revived in traditional form. (ibid. 244).

In *Testimonios de una mujer Yaqui*, (testimony of a Yaqui woman) Ricarda León Flores tells the story, recorded by her grand-son, of herself and her family, their deportation as far as Mexico City, and subsequent return to Sonora. She describes the unrelenting efforts to reach the homelands on foot, sometimes stopping to work for a while to be able to continue the journey that took years, and the joy of seeing the familiar lands and people. (Silverio and Leon 2000). In 1911 the deportation program ended and Yaquis began to

regroup, having returned to the pueblos in Sonora and created new communities in the U.S. (Hu de Hart 1981: 225).

Yaquis began coming to the United States in 1880 (Spicer 1940: xiii). In the beginning of the 20th century many crossed the border to escape death and deportation. By 1910 at least a thousand people had crossed the border, and there were at least five communities in Southern Arizona. (Spicer 1980: 236). In 1921 the U.S. government wanted to bring all the Yaquis of Arizona together into one settlement, and Pascua Village was founded 6 miles from Tucson. A missionary center was established in the community, but this time the Yaquis failed to be (re)converted. In the U.S. the Yaquis didn't set up their own governor, as there was no Yaqui land to be managed, and the U.S. civil government had already been accepted. At first in the U.S. Yaqui ceremonies weren't performed because of the fear that being identified as Yaqui would mean deportation, but in the early 20s the Easter ceremonies were revived, and by 1924 all the communities in the U.S. had their ceremonial societies intact. (Spicer 1980: 243-244).

In the 1980s, after much discussion on whether this would result in a breach of their independence, the settlement in Pascua, Arizona applied for and got reservation status, which enabled them to open a casino and to develop their community under the somewhat autonomous jurisdiction granted to Indian reservations. Their reputation as the Indian tribe that was never conquered lives on in Yaqui discourse. One example of this is pamphlets handed out to spectators at the Easter ceremony. (Schechner 1997: 103).

The trouble in Sonora finally came to an end when the Yaqui territory was recognized by the president in 1937 (Spicer 1980: 263). Significantly, also the Yaqui authorities were recognized as internal government (Moctezuma Zamarrón 2007: 11,19). Yaquis have held their territory ever since. The size of the territory is smaller than the Yaqui lands according to ancestral tradition (see figure 2). Nevertheless, the Yaquis are sometimes called "the richest tribe in Sonora," as they have quite a lot of natural resources, land, the Yaqui river, and also fishing on the coastline. The problem is that farming is controlled by the big Yori companies through, for example, unfair loan policies, and it is difficult for the Yaquis to control and benefit from their resources. Many people depend on wage labor, in the fields or in the maquiladora factories. (Erickson 200: 5-10; Moctezuma Zamarrón 2007).

### **Yaqui communities today**

Yaqui communities are in existence today in Sonora and the US. There are ties between the communities in the two countries, and visits from both

sides are frequent, especially for ritual purposes. It seems that the communities in Sonora are considered to be the authorities on ritual, tradition, and culture, but the community in Pascua, Arizona is considered more affluent. The original eight towns of Sonora still exist, but some have changed place and new communities have been founded. The communities have ceremonial societies, councils of traditional civil authorities, and autonomy within their territory. I was told that if a Yaqui is put into jail by the Sonora police, the Yaqui authorities will come and get him to be tried by Yaqui law, and the municipal police have to accept this.

The five traditional civil authorities are the governor (*kobanao*), the *pueblo mayor*, the captain, the commandant, and the secretary. The Maestros and Cantoras are important in the decision of who will hold the posts, and ability to give speeches in Yaqui is appreciated. (Moctezuma Zamarrón 2007: 34-35). The authorities are elected each January, but those who have served before remain part of the councils that unite on Sundays to discuss things. The authorities of different *pueblos* may also come together to discuss issues. (Olavarria 2003: 68, field notes). The tradition to discuss issues in groups is also a part of rituals.

Traditionally, these authorities are male. I was told that women are more included today in the discussions, although the literature suggests that in a household age is often a more important indication of seniority and authority than gender (Erickson 2008: 102-3; Spicer 1940: 41, 82). The system of ceremonial societies, which will be discussed in the following chapter, is also an important part of the *pueblo* politics.

Much of the ethnography on the Yaquis has been written in the United States, based on fieldwork in Pascua, Arizona, with the exception of Olavarria (2003) and Erickson (2008). The Spicers did fieldwork in Potam in the 1950s as well (Spicer 1954). Kristin Erickson's recent study (2008) is concerned with the production of ethnic and cultural Yaqui identity in everyday life. Important aspects are ritual, myths, the land, language, and certain repeated ideas about the differences between Yaquis and Yoris. Erickson focuses especially on women and how their talk and action reproduces the ideas and substance of what it means to be Yaqui. *Yaqui* and *Yoeme* are names that both mean the same group but are used in distinct contexts. *Yoeme* is the indigenous term. The name Yaqui was given by the Spaniards. Yaqui "refers to a political and juridical category," it signifies the ethnic group as distinct from others, while *Yoeme* as an ethnonym is considered more essential (Olavarria 2003: 54, my translation; see also Spicer 1980: 10). *Yoeme* means person, a human being, and



the same root is shared by words that mean humanity (yoemra) and being born, becoming an adult (yoemtu) (Erickson 2008:11-12).

An important distinction is that between the indigenous and other Mexicans, phrased as the Yaqui-Yori distinction. The Yaquis also distinguish themselves from other indigenous groups and hold that the Yaquis have preserved their culture and not have been assimilated as some other groups. In addition to a distinct ritual complex, Erickson found that the discourse on what it means to be Yaqui to be focused on certain characteristics, such as being able to endure difficulties, which was seen as very important. This is reflected in stories about the Yaqui diaspora and returning home over long distances, but also in how Yaqui women take pride in being able to endure childbirth without complaint. (Erickson 2008: 81). This value placed on endurance can also be seen in the rituals, where the performers are expected to put in a lot of effort, but also claim to get a lot of satisfaction out of participating.

Although the history is recognized to contain hardship and injustice, the Yaquis have never accepted the role of victim. This is also reflected in the mythical narratives that portray the Yaquis as active agents. The myths also show how the Jesuits have been cut out of the picture; there is a direct link to the Christian figures. A story called the "Holy Dividing Line" tells how angels and prophets marked the borders of the Yaqui country (see fig. 2). Like the Talking Tree, it is said to have taken place before the Spanish arrived. Four Yaqui prophets were joined by a band of angels. "They walked the length of the boundary, preaching and singing. As they sang, they defined the extent of the Yaqui tribal territory and designated the landmarks which made the boundary clear and definite [...] the singing [...] like the singing and dancing of Yaqui ceremonial performers generally, made the ground on which they trod sacred." The Prophets also founded the eight Yaqui towns, from East to West. (Spicer 1980: 169, 171).

The myth makes the Yaqui land sacred and marks its boundaries, with the support of Christian figures. Spicer sees the story as part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century rising consciousness, after the Jesuits had gone and the ownership and use of the land was being fought over (ibid. 171). Another story places the biblical flood into Yaqui country, at "the bacatete mountains, the center of the world (ibid. 168)." In the Yaqui version, there is no building of the arc, but people are saved by taking refuge on hilltops (Giddings 1959: 106-9).

### **Cócorit: the field site**

I did my field work in Cócorit, the easternmost of the original eight towns founded by the Jesuit missionaries. Cócorit means chili peppers, and the original form is Ko'oko'im. Today Cócorit has a somewhat ambiguous status as it is sometimes considered a “no longer Yaqui” town (Erickson 2008: 9, Olavarria 2003: 17). The town of Cócorit is under Mexican government, there is a municipal police station and other state offices and a Catholic church in the center. However, there is a Yaqui church on the edge of town in barrio of Conty (sometimes spelled Conti or Konti), the ritual tradition is strong, and the ceremonial societies as well as the traditional authorities are intact.



*Figure 3. The town of Cócorit. The map shows the contrast between the circular Conty road and the grid formation of the rest of the town.*

During the times of battle and the Yaqui diaspora, a large number of Yoris settled in Cócorit, and when the Yaqui territory was recognized in 1937, Cócorit and Bacum were the two pueblos left on the other side of the Yaqui River that marked a part of the border. Cócorit is not a large town, but it is lively. According to the national census of 2005, the population was 7,953,

making it the fifth largest town in the municipality (INEGI). The larger town of Esperanza is a short busride away, and buses run frequently to the larger city of Obregón, with a population of approximately 270,000 according to the 2005 national census (INEGI). This means that on one hand Cócorit is closer to more opportunities to work, but on the other, it seems it is also closer to the problems associated with the urban life, such as crime and drugs. However, these kinds of problems are growing in other Yaqui towns as well (Erickson 2008: 60-61).

I ended up doing field work in Cócorit largely by chance. On my first visit to Sonora, a few weeks before Holy Week in 2004, the goal was to visit Yaqui communities and make arrangements to return for longer field work. I arrived in Ciudad Obregón, the city closest to the eight Yaqui towns in Sonora, after a 30-hour bus ride from Mexico City with my husband. My husband is a native of Mexico City, so on one hand, he was recognized as Mexican, and he knew all the codes of being polite in Spanish, something I was still struggling with. On the other hand, with his long curly hair and unmistakable city-slickness, he stood out just as much as I did. Anyway, he asked people where we could find transport to a Yaqui community, and "where they had the best Yaqui Easter." Someone told us to go to Cócorit, so we decided to start there. After about a half hour on the bus, we arrived at a small plaza, lined with houses and small stores. We started asking around about the Yaqui rituals and about a place to stay, about renting a room for a few weeks. We were told that maybe with "the teacher." We knocked on the door, but no one answered. Then we heard drumming and followed the sound, ending up at the Yaqui church in the barrio called Conty, where a ritual had apparently just been finished and people dressed in white were leaving. We asked when there would be more and a very amiable young woman answered our questions. She also told us that we might be able to rent a room with an elderly man who lived nearby. We found the gentleman in question just around the corner from the church plaza. He rented us a room in a building on his lot that comprised his house, some trees, nopal patches, another building with several rooms, and a shower and bathroom complex where water came through a hose. Next we found out about who we could talk to about getting permission to watch the rituals. We spoke to one of the traditional authorities of the community, who told us we were welcome to watch and I could take notes, but that photography or making sound recordings was not allowed, and that we had to behave and dress in a respectful manner.

Waiting for the rituals to begin, we explored the town and noted the difference between the Yaqui church on the Northern edge of town, and the

Catholic one in the geographical center, where there was a typical Mexican open plaza, complete with a small round *kiosco* structure and a bust of Miguel Hidalgo. Here the streets formed a grid, while the Conty church was surrounded by a circular road, where the *konti* processions took place<sup>1</sup>. We noted the beautiful big fancy houses, the nice ones, and the ones put together of cardboard and sheet metal. A canal runs through the western side of town. There are also at least two active evangelist churches in Córorit. Jehovah's witnesses came to distribute flyers door to door at Easter time in 2007.

Around the town fields stretch out, the mountains are visible in the distance. Conty is also one of the two terminals for buses that run between Córorit and Ciudad Obregón. Near the terminal is a small general store, which blasts music, has video games, and serves as a local hang out. Outside of Lent the Conty church is quiet and Córorit seems like any small, rural town in Mexico. However, at Easter time it is transformed by the ritual and the crowds that follow, and most noticeably by the presence of the Chapayekas. Although the Conty church is a center for the rituals, there is no geographically delineated Yaqui community. Many houses, all kinds and on all sides of the town, have residents that participate in the Yaqui rituals. Some of the performers live in other nearby communities, such as Villa Bonita, that are not at all considered to be Yaqui communities. Some, originally from Córorit, only return for the rituals and live and work elsewhere in Sonora, other states, even across the border in the United States. This is a pattern that was established in the colonial times, and has made it possible to balance cultural continuity with answering to the demands and taking advantage of the possibilities of the non-Yaqui world. Some Yaquis went to Loma de Guamuchil which was founded after the land treaty as a replacement for Córorit. Others are very proud of their town, where they and their ancestors were born and note that it is still the *cabecera*, the first town. The historical importance of Córorit is undeniable. It was also chosen as the site of a museum of Yaqui culture, opened in 2008, by the Sonora state government.

One difference between Córorit and other Yaqui towns in Sonora at Easter is that there are more people in addition to the performers present in

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<sup>1</sup> The ritual processions around the road that marks the Way of the Cross are usually referred to as *konti* in the literature, and this is where the Yaqui church and barrio in Córorit gets its name. However, on maps it is usually spelled Conty. I have used Conty to mean the part of town in Córorit and *konti* to refer to the ritual act and place.

Cócorit. In addition to the ritual, there are numerous food stands, games, even amusement park rides were set up at the edge of the church plaza. There are some (non-Yaquis) who admit they dislike witnessing the rituals in Cócorit, but they say it is because of the crowds, nobody faults the performances. Easter is celebrated intensely. The performers I spoke to were very clear that they felt this was their place of origin, and that Cócorit was an important Yaqui town. Cócorit is by no means isolated from the other Yaqui communities. Relations are upheld to the other towns, people came from other communities for the rituals, and people from Cócorit commonly went to dance and perform in communities in the U.S. and Sonora.

Being indigenous is generally an important distinction in Mexico both socially and in terms of state policies (Erickson 2008, see also Muehlmann 2007). At the same time, individual identities in Cócorit are not unchanging or unambiguous. Although many people do not speak the Yaqui language or participate in the rituals, they have some connection to the group. It seems that everybody has at least a grandparent that is Yaqui. Some claim to be fluent in the language, yet do not participate in the rituals, or vice versa. There is no way of determining the “real” ethnic background of all the performers, but I would argue that the correct ritual convention is what is more important in both emic and etic senses. The situation does not seem to be that different from the other towns, Erickson describes how people who are perhaps not Yaqui “by blood” nevertheless consider themselves Yaqui through social relations, place of residence and action. There are many examples of someone who isn’t Yaqui being allowed to perform in rituals. I spoke with a non-Yaqui man who had been offered a chance to perform as a Chapayeka in another Yaqui community. The anthropologist Steven Lutes danced as a *Pascola* in the deer dance (Lutes 1983).

### **Conclusions: continuity as convention**

The history of the Yaquis shows that they have been able to combine change and continuity, convention and invention, and they continue to do so in life and ritual, and in relating these two. On the basis on their previous conventions, they have invented new conventions in the face of changes as well as reinventing the conventions of others and using them to reinvent themselves. ‘Being Yaqui’ is created by periodic conventional action or reference to it. As a time of heightened conventionalization, ritual can be looked at as the counterpart to everyday life in which people concentrate on getting on with their own individual lives, often away from the community. Outside Easter many people do not live in Cócorit, they do not necessarily live

in Yaqui communities, speak the language, wear Yaqui clothing, eat Yaqui food or do other things considered Yaqui. The ritual, however, entails all of these as well as being a symbolic expression. In a way everyday life today can be looked at as drifting away from the conventions of Yaqui culture, and ritual pulls the people back in. On the other hand, the conventionalizing recreates the common human basis, upon which the inventions and individualizations, the every day creation of difference is based. One stays (or becomes) Yaqui by coming to the community periodically to participate in the ritual, to do Yaqui things. Many performers explicitly stated that they see performance as a way of protecting and upholding the traditions and culture. The Yaquis create and maintain conventions through the ritual performance, which in turn creates and maintains them as Yaquis.

Invention and convention alternate and make each other possible. The continuities within the culture are also the conventional, established, shared parts of culture. However, invention, or the extension of those conventions into new relations is also a part of culture and necessary for its continued existence. For example, the inventions of Christian material in terms of the situation of the Yaquis and the subsequent invention of that situation in terms of new material can be seen in the now conventional myths. The myth of the marking of the borders makes Yaqui land their sacred territory and further affirms the link between the Yaquis and the Christian spirits, without the influence of the Jesuits. The Talking Tree puts the origin of the Yaquis at the coming of the Spanish and the creation of a new world, but also puts Yaquis into a position of agency and retains the power of the Surem ancestors as part of the cosmology. This cosmology of different beings and powers is the context of Yaqui culture and religion, recreated, represented, and accessed in ritual.

## Chapter 2

### Yaqui Religion: Realms, Beings, and Forms of Participation

Religion is a very important part of the continuity of Yaqui culture as it provides the conventional pole in the dialectic of invention and convention created by ritual and non-ritual life. An individual's participation in ritual is mediated through certain conventional forms: membership in ceremonial societies, ritual kinship, and *mandas*, sacred vows. Participating in ritual relates an individual with other humans, as well as deities and other cosmological beings. I argue that Yaqui religion is more about action and performance, accepting and fulfilling one's responsibilities, than individual belief or the acceptance of dogma. Inner states or experiences are created through action, but they are more the result than a necessary starting point or constant state.

Yaqui religion is a distinct form of Christianity. The Catholic material has been thoroughly reinvented in terms of Yaqui cosmology and world view, which have themselves been reinvented in the process to include the new deities. In mythology and practice the Yaquis have a direct relation to the Christian deities; the missionaries do not figure in the picture. Some elements are considered to be more indigenous than others, but given the long history, it is difficult to actually ascertain whether these elements actually date from pre-Hispanic times; the distinction is aesthetic and meaningful rather than an actual historic one. Certain elements are associated with powers and realms that are considered indigenous. There is no conflict between the elements that are considered to be indigenous or Catholic. In certain situations – such as different kinds of instruments and music used in the deer dance – the distinction is a meaningful part of the trope, but it is not a distinction that would run unchanging through the material. Effectively the rituals, Easter most importantly, are tropes of the cosmology as consisting of different powerful beings and realms.

#### The different realms of Yaqui cosmology

The Yaqui word *ania* means world or realm. There are several different *anias*, which are not mutually exclusive; they can overlap, or be different aspects of the same concept. The *anias* are places or aspects of places, but they are best understood as sources of cosmic power. *Huya ania* is the 'woods world,' the untamed wilderness that surrounds the town. In Spanish it is translated as *monte*. The *monte* is the source of many material things – such as game to be hunted or wood for masks – as well as spiritual power. *Yoania* is



sometimes described as the ancient, spiritual dimension of the huya ania, yo meaning old or elder in the sense of ancient, primordial. Yoania is everywhere in huya ania, but it is more powerfully present in certain places and animals, such as the deer. (Spicer 1980: 64-65). Yo is also sometimes translated as enchanted. In this capacity the non-Christian power inherent in yoania is emphasized, which can set it against Catholic Yaqui. Yoania and its power are sometimes linked to the devil. Yoania is sometimes considered like a person, able to see people and exercise agency upon them. (Painter 1986: 20-21, 23).

*Seania* or sea ania is the flower world, the huya ania in bloom. Flowers are an important symbol in all aspects of Yaqui religion, regardless of the fact that these aspects are sometimes opposed. As a symbol it ties everything together. As seania, the monte can be represented in a very poetic way in the deer songs, as well as a lighthearted and magical place where miracles can happen, as in the stories told by the Pascola dancers. (Evers & Molina 1987: 62; Painter 1986: 3-4, 355).

*Tenku ania* is the dream world, the source of dreams. Dreams are an important aspect of an individual's relation to the deities, as dreams and prayer are the ways one can receive messages from and communicate with them (Painter 1986 122-3, 127, 138-9 et passim).

In conversation with people in Córorit, the one realm that came up often was the monte. Dictionaries define monte as non cultivated land with wild plants and animals (diccionario del español usual en Mexico), or as woods or mountains (wsoy suomi-espanja suursanakirja). In Córorit, when people spoke of the monte, they would gesture towards the surrounding mountains. I got the impression that the monte was still a kind of great beyond, a possibly dangerous source of magic and power, and had been so especially in the past. A Chapayeka performer told me the Chapayekas used to go together to the monte to make their masks and leave the unfinished masks and materials out there until they were finished, but now there are kids doing drugs there and they couldn't leave the materials there any more, so the masks are made inside the houses.

Although it entails a separation of human civilization and the wilderness, the distinction between the monte and the town is not a distinction between nature and culture, as the monte is not devoid of agency or sentient beings. The Surem are cultured beings, with their objects and gold treasures. The deer may intentionally enchant the hunter (Painter 1986: 274-5). Rather, the case is similar to the "perspectivism" of Amazonian indigenous peoples described by Viveiros de Castro (2000): different beings – humans, animals and spirits – have different bodies and therefore different natures, but share culture



in the sense they are all subjects – each has a point of view. Different beings may have different views of each other, but all are thinking, feeling beings that reason and relate to the environment and each other. This is different from the Western idea of a common nature and different cultures. This is also related to a concept of power as embodied – yielded by and borrowed from different beings by taking on a different body. Viveiros de Castro describes a specific Amerindian worldview, which is also manifest in ritual and myth, ideas about shamanism and humans changing into animals, but it is also similar to the worldview that Wagner describes for differentiating societies – a world of “immanent humanity,” populated by different beings and powers (Wagner 1981: 87).

### **Fiesta and the deer dance**

*Fiesta* in the Yaqui context refers to ritual events that typically last all night. The Yaqui deer dance is an essential part of the fiesta; the deer dance in its totality consists of a cycle of songs and dance. The deer dancer performs with the Pascolas, also a masked clown figure, but very different from the Chapayekas. The deer dance is the embodiment of yoania and seania; both the deer and the Pascolas mediate power of yoania, but they are opposed in a way similar to Jesus and the Chapayekas. The Pascolas are hunters; they kill the deer, who is reborn as a fawn at the end of the ritual. This is similar to the cycle of sacrifice and rebirth in the Easter ritual. The deer dance is also performed as part of the Easter ritual and brings with it a connection to the monte and yoania. The Yaqui deer dance is famous throughout Mexico; a greatly modified version is performed by the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico dance company. The deer dancer is the symbol of the state of Sonora, representations are seen on car licence plates, logos, etc.

The deer dance is performed by one deer dancer and one or preferably more Pascolas, the deer singer and several musicians. Also present is the manager of the Pascolas. In addition to performers, the Pascolas are also the hosts of the fiesta; they give people water and cigarettes, and engage with the spectators. As the cycle progresses through its phases, at times the deer dances alone, at times the Pascolas and the deer dance together and sometimes the Pascolas dance alone. These phases are marked by changes in the music, the Pascolas dance to European instruments, such as the fiddle, and the deer dances only to traditional indigenous instruments, the water drum and the rasp. (Painter 1986: 241-2, 263). The deer is enchanted and lives in the flower world, which is vividly described in the songs. The deer possesses supernatural power, and is said to be the most beloved, sacred, and feared

animal. The deer also have a leader, who “governs and protects them.” (ibid. 272).

The deer songs consist of short verses that are repeated several times:

Aa flower-covered fawn went out,  
enchanted, from each enchanted flower  
wilderness world,  
he went out.

Flower-covered fawn went out,  
enchanted, from each enchanted flower  
wilderness world,  
he went out.

Aa flower-covered fawn went out,  
enchanted, from each enchanted flower  
wilderness world,  
he went out.

Flower-covered fawn went out,  
enchanted, from each enchanted flower  
wilderness world,  
he went out.

Over there, in the flower-covered  
enchanted opening,  
as he is walking,  
he went out.

Flower-covered fawn went out,  
enchanted, from each enchanted flower  
wilderness world,  
he went out.

(Evers and Molina 1987: 88).

The songs repeat the same form. As the fiesta progresses, the songs describe how the deer grows, dies, and is reborn. Unlike other narratives such as the Pascola stories, the deer songs are repeated verbatim (Sands 1983: 359). The deer songs and dances are considered to come from the time of the Surem, long before Christianity, before the Talking Tree. This is another link to the

monte, where the Surem continue to exist. Song is considered the language of the huya ania.

"It is through song that experience with other living things in the wilderness world is made intelligible and accessible to the human community... deer songs often take the form of dialogues in which *saila maso* [little brother deer] and others in the wilderness world speak with one another or with the deer singers themselves. It is in this way, according to deer singer Miki Maaso, that "the wilderness world listens to itself even today."" (Evers and Molina 1987: 18).

New songs and stories are created by the performers according to stylistic conventions. Some songs show Christian influences (ibid. 42, 57).

### **The "old man of the fiesta:" the Pascola clowns**

The comparison between the Pascolas and the Chapayekas and especially their different use of masks, will help understand both figures and shed light on the role of the clown in the dynamics of Yaqui ritual. The Pascolas are "clowns who represent the monte" (Sands 1983: 360). Pascola comes from *pahk'ola*, *pahko* is the Yaqui word for fiesta and Pascola is the old man of the fiesta. In myths the Pascolas are the sons of the devil, asked to perform at the first fiesta. The devil gives his sons permission, but warns them not to shoot off any rockets. The Pascolas do so anyway, and the rockets force the devil, who was hiding in the bushes to watch the fiesta, to flee. (Giddings 1959: 146-7)

The Pascola performance includes lewd horseplay, teasing the deer and acting out little farces. The Pascolas engage in improvised banter with the audience and tell tall-tale type humorous stories. In a translated and published story the Pascola tells how he ate watermelon on horseback and some seeds fell into a sore on the horse's withers. The horse was left in a pasture to heal, and when the Pascola returned to get him, a huge vine with many watermelons had grown out of the sore. "Well, I took my horse to my house and cut many watermelons, good-sized and ripe, off of him. I sold them, and gave them to my neighbors. Later, I cut the trunk of the watermelon vine off and cured my horse. When he died, I gave him a fiesta and did mourning for six months." (Giddings 1959: 135-6).

Unlike the Chapayeka helmet type mask that covers the entire head, the Pascola mask is an oval that only covers a part of the face and is tied in the back. The masks have long beards and eyebrows made of horse or cow hair and are said to resemble a goat. The masks are made of wood and painted with red, black and white designs of triangles and crosses and little creatures of the

monte, such as lizards or insects. The colors and designs each have significance: red is associated with the devil, and also joy. White is linked with purity, tranquility, balanced activity and spiritual grace, while black is related to death, gloom and sorrow. The cross on the mask represents the church, the faith and the pueblo as it ought to be. Lizards and flowers are linked with order and fecundity in nature, and also saints and Jesus. (Lutes 1983: 89- 90, field notes).

The Pascolas normally dance barefoot but sometimes wear Yaqui sandals with the characteristic leather thongs attached to soles at three points. They are usually naked from the waist up, like the deer, although I have seen one young performer dance with a shirt on. They wear necklaces with crosses. These necklaces are very important, Lutes was told that going to dance without a necklace the Pascola would be like any “man without his shirt, going out to take a bath” (ibid. 88). Over their pants, the legs rolled up, the Pascolas wear a folded blanket. From the ankles to the knees they wear similar *teneboim* rattles as the deer and the Chapayekas. Sometimes they wear bells on the belt as well. They carry a rattle. The deer never dances a full performance without the Pascolas, but the Pascolas may also perform without the deer on certain occasions; in earlier times at least, the Pascolas commonly performed at weddings, one representing the bride and another the groom. The Pascolas danced at the houses of the bride and groom. When the couple was brought together, the Pascolas carried out their own show as a representation of the marriage. This may still be done, although it seems that in Cócorit, those who do get married officially and by the church instead of simply moving in together, usually do so in the Catholic church at the center. However, when I asked a young couple if they would consider getting married in the Conty church, the girl joked, “yeah, with Pascolas and everything!” Although it was clear she didn’t think the tradition was something she would choose, she was familiar with it. According to Erickson, the performance of Pascolas at weddings is no longer very common in other pueblos either, partly because of the cost involved, but the tradition is well known and would mark the couple as “true Yaquis” (Erickson 2008: 86).

The Pascolas have mythological associations to the devil that add to the ambivalence of this essentially benign figure. “The first fiesta” tells the origin myth of the Pascolas as well as of fiestas: A hunter living in Huiviris heard the sound of the drum in the monte, but didn’t see the player. This was before the drums or Pascolas were known. The next day he returned and heard more music at the same spot. The hunter also sent his twin boys to listen, but warned them not to go too close to the spines of the bushes. When the twins

went, they heard very beautiful music, and then a rat came out from underneath the spines. The rat invited the boys to his house. The rat showed the drum and the flute to the boys, who told their father. Then "our mother Eva" came to the hunter's house. She said: "From this time on there shall be religious fiestas. You, from now on, are the *moro yaut*. Your children shall make *cohetes*. Tomorrow you must go over to see *bwiya toli* and tell him that you are going to have a fiesta and that he should come to play. After that, go to the Devil and have him come to dance Pascola." (the *moro yaut* is the "manager" of the Pascolas, *cohetes* are rockets, an important part of all rituals, *bwiya toli* is the rat). The hunter followed the instructions, but the devil said that instead of going himself, he would send his son (two sons in some versions) to dance. The devil instructed his son to go and "be very funny in order that all the Yaquis may laugh" but not to light the rockets. When the devil's son arrived at the fiesta, the Yaquis asked him to light three rockets, saying it was the obligation of all Pascolas. Rockets are sacred, they are lit to send a message to the deities and also to make the devil and other evil spirits flee. This is also why the devil had warned his son against the rockets. The son did, however, light the rocket, and threw it at his father, who had come to watch his son and was hiding in the bushes. The rocket made the devil run away. He returned later, but then the second rocket was lit, and "[f]rom that time on, the Devil has not been able to attend fiestas." (Giddings 1959: 145-7).

This myth is interesting in many ways. The instruments and music are not invented by people, but found in the monte. The myth also links the monte, the devil and Christian figures: "Our Mother Eve" herself gives the instruction that the devil should dance at fiestas. As in the Easter ritual, the activeness and agency of figures goes beyond that in the Bible. In other versions, God or Jesus, or Jesus and Mary, are setting up the first fiesta and the devil provides the Pascola (Painter 1986: 258-262).

The devil is set up as an ambiguous figure. He is needed to dance Pascola, but is replaced by his sons. The devil hides in the bushes to watch the fiesta and is not portrayed as particularly dangerous, but is nevertheless driven away by the rockets. The devil and the monte are important parts of the power of the Pascola. Steven Lutes (1983), who ended up performing as a Pascola while conducting fieldwork for a study of alcohol use among Yaquis, has written of the power and efficacy of the Pascola. His testimony and analysis provides an interesting perspective, as it combines the point of view of the performer and the anthropologist. He says the Pascola is morally ambiguous and embodies a variety of symbolic elements. Lutes says that according to his experience Yaquis fear the color black "far more than they fear the devil, who

is assigned to a distinct category and, at least, has some amusing and even positive connotations" and "the devil is a trickster type and not always evil incarnate" despite his "essentially unsavoury nature." Lutes also talks about how the rituals involve a mediation of supernatural power. "The devil has great powers that, in limited contexts, can assist the Yaqui in their efforts to maintain an equitable balance in the supernatural and mundane worlds." (Lutes 1983: 84-85).

Lutes says that "the fiesta is a tool for making, containing, and using power" (ibid. 91). I agree, and would add that this is probably the most important aspect of all Yaqui ritual, and the clowns and tricksters are an extremely important part of that. The deer and Jesus are powerful in their own right. The clowns, however, mediate the power of someone else, an Other. The Pascola is the son of the devil; he is not the devil himself.

The Pascola performers can also be personally associated with the devil. One of the ways the deer dancer and Pascolas are different from other Yaqui performers is that as performers they are also judged on talent. There are different ways to becoming a good Pascola. A Pascola might have innate talent, a calling from God. However, the talent (and supernatural powers in some cases) can also be acquired. Supernatural power can be channeled through the rituals to serve the community or the church, but also to enhance "personal efficacy" through experience and ritual knowledge. This leads to "a deeper knowledge of the self and cosmos." A person of power "stands out" and is capable of "exceptional action." (ibid. 84). One way is to make a pact with the devil, by finding a powerful place in the monte and meeting the devil in a cave. (ibid. 86-7). This is specific to the deer dance performers; members of other ceremonial societies receive and channel power from the Christian deities or other beings, but this power is not thought to give the individual "personal efficacy" or make the performance better in an artistic sense.

Lutes also personally felt the power of performing in Yaqui ritual. He experienced "Fiesta dreams." Dreams are considered very important and a part of communicating with the powers. Dreams – and this way the power – can also be stolen, and Lutes was warned to be careful about talking about his dreams. After performing he felt a great fatigue and a sense of fulfillment. Later he fell ill, which was called a "susto," a fright, "due to the powers of the Pascola dance." The anthropologist was not prepared for the power, that is why he got sick, the Yaquis explained. (ibid. 89).

### **The Pascolas' performance compared to the Chapayekas**

I have seen Pascola performances on the Saturday of Glory during Easter in 2004, 2006 and 2007. In 2006 I also saw Pascolas and the deer perform at a fiesta at a private household. The Pascola performance is more difficult to grasp without ritual knowledge than that of the Chapayekas. They speak Yaqui in performance, and the dance itself requires specified knowledge to interpret. The Pascolas gave a general impression of friendly clowns as they faced the audience smiling and speaking in high-pitched voices. Their general stance is more relaxed than that of the Chapayekas, and the distinction between performing and not performing, or the performer and his mask is not as sharp.

Jesus, the deer, and the Chapayekas all go through a cycle of death, rebirth, aging and sacrifice. Their power waxes and wanes. The Pascola remains the same, always the old man of the fiesta. A Chapayeka performer pointed out to me that the Pascola is the only ritual figure that never dies. "The Chapayekas die, the Matachinis die, the deer dies, but the Pascolas never die." The other powerful beings represented in Yaqui ritual go through cycles of death and rebirth that on the one hand revitalize their power and on the other hand contain and channel it; Jesus and the deer are thought to be born as babies and to grow old before death. The first Chapayeka emerges alone and weak and is at the height of his power at the crucifixion of Jesus. The Pascola is a very benevolent being, but as compared with the other beings, he represents a constant, somehow ancient, power that isn't subject to these cycles.

The Pascolas and the Chapayekas are the only performers in Yaqui ritual to wear masks. According to Viveiros de Castro, in many parts of the Americas putting on masks in ritual is a way to tap into the power of the being portrayed, "to activate the powers of a different body" (Viveiros de Castro 2000: 482, see also Crumrine and Halpin 1983). This is exactly what the Yaqui clowns do; they mediate the power of an outside source. "The innate properties of things are tricked, compelled, cajoled, elicited... by human action, but not brought into being by that action" (Wagner 1981: 89-90). Magic taps power, it doesn't create it. The beings commonly evoked in magic wouldn't be needed at all, if the effect were created. (ibid. 90). The masks and the differentiating mode are a way of tapping power inherent in the beings portrayed in the masks and evoked in performance. However, the Pascolas have a totally different relation to their masks than the Chapayekas. John Emigh has proposed that the relation between a performer and mask is paradigmatic of the relationship between self and Other as it is conceived in the performance (Emigh 1996: xvii). The two Yaqui clowns have a different

relation to their character and to the Other they portray and a different way of tapping and mediating power. Although the deer dance and the Easter ritual resemble each other in that both have a deity figure that goes through a cycle of death and rebirth, and this cycle is put in motion by a clown, the rituals have different cosmological implications, a different scale. The relations of the clowns to their masks are a key to the differences in the rituals and their cosmological relations.

A Pascola performer who is dressed for performance may at different times perform with his mask on or without it. In 2006 on Easter Sunday I saw a Pascola, with the mask off or to the side, stop with a boy performing as a *Cabo* in line, waiting to go into the church. The Pascola carried a cup of soda. He danced and clowned a bit for the boy. This is in stark contrast to the Chapayekas, who are either performing or not, in character or out, depending on whether they are wearing the mask or not. The only time I saw a Chapayeka performer even remotely act like this without the mask on, was in 2007, when a clown Chapayeka without a mask was on a ladder fixing the PA system and a child representing a little angel passed. The Chapayeka reached out towards the little girl, and afterwards on the ground, stomped his feet at her. No-one paid the Chapayeka any attention. The Angelito, accompanied by her godparents, did not react at all.

The Pascola sometimes performs with the mask on the side of his head or at the back during the deer dance. The mask on the left side of the head is said to protect the performer from witches or the devil (Painter 1986: 244). The Pascola mask is not considered to have a similar agency and power on its own as the Chapayeka mask and does not pose the same danger to the performer, but protects him. Although a good mask is highly valued, and does aid a good performance, a Pascola mask is not hedged with the same taboos as the Chapayeka mask. Even a Pascola mask that has been used in performance may be photographed or given away and is in fact be a very valuable gift. (ibid. 244, field notes).

The power of the Pascola is not located in the mask as much as that of the Chapayeka. There is still a dialectic of the mask and performer, but it is not as dangerous. Like the Chapayekas, the Pascolas are ambiguous and have elements of both good and evil. Like the Chapayekas, the Pascolas both conventionalize and differentiate, and shift between these modes in their performance. The Pascolas are also linked to otherness in that there are many non-Yaqui elements in their performance, for example, they dance to European music, and Painter mentions how they might joke about having arrived from New York. The Pascolas mediate the power of the monte and the devil. The



Chapayekas mediate the power of otherness in many forms, including animals and figures from TV and movies.

The relation of wearer and mask indicates that the power mediated by the Pascolas is not as dangerous. Is the devil of the monte not as powerful, or as dangerous as the Others portrayed by the Chapayekas? What about the deer as compared to Jesus? As a ritual symbol, the deer is a somewhat ambivalent figure. Traditionally, the deer was hunted. The deer is also considered enchanted, able to bewitch the hunter. The relationship between humans and the deer, then, is somewhat antagonistic and as hunters, the Pascolas represent humans in relation to the deer, who, as prey, represents *huya ania* as a source of well being in the form of food. The Pascolas are Other, as the sons of the devil, but they are also human, benevolent, and social.

In comparison Jesus is fully identified with humans while the Chapayekas are fully other. Certainly the death of Jesus is a stronger event in terms of cosmic power and happens only once in the yearly cycle; it needs a strong counterpart. It is enough for the Pascolas to pray, ask for forgiveness and this way purify themselves, the Chapayeka needs its own cycle of death and rebirth. The Pascolas may even perform without the deer in certain occasions such as weddings, but the Chapayekas only appear during a short period in the year and never unaccompanied by other performers. If the death and rebirth of the deer revitalizes and places the different powers and realms in relation with each other, the death and rebirth of Jesus is a revitalization of the entire community and cosmology on a grander scale. Easter is a big event in the cycle of the entire year, while a fiesta is a standard part of any ritual event.

### **Jesus in the Yaqui land: St. Peter as a trickster figure**

Yaqui Myths and Stories (Giddings 1959) collected by Ruth Giddings includes several stories that place Jesus into Yaqui land. In these stories he wanders around curing people before the crucifixion. In the Yaqui stories the curing is given a lot of emphasis. In addition to raising a person from the dead, Jesus performs many less dramatic cures. Health is important and continues to be associated with Yaqui religion; the *manda*, a vow to perform in ritual, is often made in response to illness. There are also traditional *curanderos*, healers. They are respected, as opposed to the witches who want to harm people (field notes 2006).

The most striking thing about Jesus in the Yaqui stories is that he is always accompanied by a trickster-disciple, St. Peter. While Jesus is almost left in the background, Peter is responsible for most of the action. In these stories

Peter is greedy, always eating or looking for food, as well as expressing his wishes that Jesus would ask for payment for curing people. Jesus, however, is not without a sense of humor. When Peter, caught eating without sharing, claims to be eating burro manure, he finds his food has changed into just that. Jesus also helps Peter to win a competition against the devil by trickery. (Giddings 1959: 113, 114).

In the story "Jesucristo and San Pedro" Jesus has revived Lazarus, and Peter is upset that Jesus performs his cures for free instead of charging money. Peter thinks, "If it had been I who cured Lazaro, I should have asked a great deal of money." As Jesus wanders around, he also teaches the Yaquis his curing methods. This way also Peter learns, and begins to think he could raise the dead and charge a fee. However, when he tries, he is unable to bring the dead back to life, and has to ask for help from Jesus. The story ends stating that since then Peter was very good at curing, but always with the help of Jesus. (ibid. 111-112).

In "San Pedro and Cristo" Jesus sends Peter to a house to get them a chicken to eat. On the way back Peter eats one of the legs and then claims that all the chickens in the area have only one leg and points to chickens resting with one foot up as proof. When Jesus takes a rock and throws it at one of the chickens who wakes up and now stands on both feet, Peter claims it to be a miracle. Then Peter takes a rock and throws it at the rest, remarking that he, too, can perform miracles. (ibid. 110).

Although there are no figures in the Bible that really fit the description of a trickster, St. Peter, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, does provide potential for being a trickster in that he attempts too much and fails, and is often contradictory. He tries to walk on water, but loses faith and sinks (Matthew 14: 28-31). He denies Jesus three times after boasting he never would (Matthew 26: 33-75). There is a notable example of reversal associated with St. Peter: according to traditional knowledge, he was crucified upside down (Catholic encyclopaedia). In popular culture there are many jokes that feature St. Peter as the keeper of heaven's gates, a mediator and boundary keeper, which are classic trickster traits. Exactly how St. Peter became a trickster figure for the Yaquis, however, is unknown. These stories also exist in mediaeval European folklore and among other groups in the southwest area of the United States (Hynes and Steele 1993: 160).

The figure of St. Peter is in a way an inversion of clowns in Yaqui ritual, who mediate an Other power, which is set against a deity figure, powerful in itself. While the Chapayeka is set against Jesus and mediates his sacrifice like the Pascola does that of the deer, Peter is with Jesus, not mediating a power

against him. However, Peter is not the same as Jesus. Peter actually attempts to tap into Jesus's power, but is never able to. The clowns do tap another power, and it is this power that is set against the power of Jesus or the deer. Unlike other trickster figures that are sometimes powerful, Peter isn't. The only time that Peter is victorious is the story where Jesus helps Peter trick the devil. Here they work together and Jesus agrees to help. Another interesting thing about this story is that the victory is completely gained by trickery and Jesus has no moral qualms about this. The clowns bring out the powers of the figures through opposition, Peter shows that the powers of Jesus cannot be taken by cunning. It seems that for the Yaquis, the power of deity figures must always be balanced, mediated, by a clown or trickster. As part of the tropes, all three demonstrate the power of the deity figures and mediate the relations of humans to deities, simultaneously breaching (hunting, killing, stealing) and guarding the boundary (as the only beings able to cross it) between these different kinds of beings.

### **Yaqui Christianity**

The Yaqui religion is usually characterized as Catholicism or Yaqui Catholicism. The Yaqui Maestros have not been considered a part of the Catholic hierarchy in Pascua, and sometimes separate rites have been necessary to satisfy both the demands of Yaqui religion and county requirements. (Spicer 1940: 118, 218). The County church is not connected to the official Catholic hierarchies. Moctezuma Zamarrón (2007: 44) describes the actions of the Yaqui Maestros and the official Catholic priests as complementary; the Maestros take care of the Yaqui rituals and the priests give mass and administer the sacraments.

Yaqui religion shares certain key elements with other Christian groups. Yaqui religion is focused on Jesus Christ as savior and the Bible is a central text. Refugio Savala planned to translate it into Yaqui (Savala 1980: 217-8). As is common in Mexico, the Virgin Mary, in the form of the Virgin of Guadalupe, is extremely important. There are, however, distinctly Yaqui ritual forms and ways of participation. Spicer (1980: 60) argues that "[i]t is the distinctive orientations of Yaqui religious life as a whole which justify calling it a new religion." As these orientations Spicer lists the importance of the natural world and its relation to the Christian dogma, the importance of the total community's participation in the Easter ritual, the organized relations of church, community, and separate households and the independent "management of their religious affairs by the people of a Yaqui community" (ibid. 60).

There is a distinct worldview and cosmology that comes out in the rituals and myths. The Christian material has been accepted, embedded in, and interpreted through this worldview. It is impossible to say whether or how the worldview has changed in this process, but it remains distinct, and has certain features, such as being dialectical and cyclical, in common with other Native American and Mesoamerican cosmologies. As the Easter ritual is a – perhaps the – central part of this cosmology, this will become clearer in the analysis of the ritual.

In Cócorit there did not seem to be any conflict between the Yaqui church in the Conty and the Catholic Church in the town center. When I asked if there was a difference, people said things like “going to the Conty church is the same as going to any church.” Comments like this also came up when I spoke to people about correct conduct during the ceremonies. One had to show respect, “just like in any church (field notes 2006, interview).” The representations of the saints used in the Yaqui Easter are considered the same as any representation of the saint and referred to by name; for example as “the Lord,” or “the Blessed Virgin.” The Bible was sometimes referred to in conversation as proof, “just like it says in the Bible.” Many people attended functions in both churches, as could be seen on Ash Wednesday, when there was an earlier service at the Catholic Church and many people arrived to attend the service at the Conty church with ash marks already on their foreheads. The town church is also the place where many people would have the *quinceañera* ceremony for a girl's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, weddings, and baptisms, even if they participated in the Yaqui Easter as well. Participating in the Yaqui Easter is seen as religious even for people who would not consider themselves completely Yaquis. The only statements that showed doubt of the Yaqui ritual's Catholicism were made by visitors who came from cd. Obregón and implied that the Passion Play put on there would be more proper.

In addition to the Conty church and the Catholic church in the center, there were three evangelical churches, which seemed to have some activity, but not as much. A woman at the Conty told me that she did not like them as they did not have pictures of the Virgin and that she felt that the Virgin had often helped her. Many homes have altars, with pictures or figures. The palm crosses that are made in the course of the Easter ritual are placed visibly outside the door.

The Yaqui ritual calendar follows the Catholic one. Important days in addition to Easter are the Finding of the Holy Cross in May, the day of John the Baptist in June, and the Day of the Dead in November, which is an extremely important day in all Mexico. Traditionally, there should be also a celebration

on the day of the town's patron saint. On this day, a town separates into two, the red and the blue, and there is a ritual battle and fiestas. This is similar to the dance of *Moros y Cristianos* (Moors and Christians), known in other parts of Mexico as well, but the practice has continued in only half of the original eight towns: Torim, Vicam, Rahum and Potam. (Moctezuma Zamarrón 2007: 44). Individual households have rites as needed, baptisms, quinceañeras, weddings, funerals, and ceremonies to mark the ninth day and first anniversary after a funeral. Fiestas are often a part of these. Easter is arguably the most important ritual occasion of the year; it is also somewhat opposed to the rest of the year. Olavarria calls the rest of the year "ordinary time" and notes that all other rites, including individual rites of passage should take place outside of Lent (Olavarria 2003: 123-124). Spicer points out that although "Yaqui observances conform to the Catholic calendar and include no ocasiones not sanctioned by it...if one considers the ceremonial year as a whole, it is immediately apparent that a sharp dichotomy exists..." Spicer notes the difference in mood during the different seasons and connects this with the different ceremonial groups associated with each season, *Fariseos* with Lent and Easter, and *Matachines* with the rest of the year. (Spicer 1980: 60-61).

### **Participating in religion**

Correct behavior and the performing of ritual work are emphasized over ideas of inner belief. Although there is the idea that it is important to perform one's religious duty with the right attitude, "with good heart," as in the title of Muriel Thayer Painter's (1986) account of "Yaqui beliefs and practices," this refers to not thinking bad thoughts, and following the restrictions. It is rather a request to sincerely focus on one's ritual labor as an action, so that good results come from it, rather than a state of being as a convert or believer.

The highly conventionalized side of ritual, the widely spread knowledge of them, and the ceremonial societies as a system of *cargos*, specific roles and duties, make the practice of performing the Easter ritual remarkably flexible. Although many of the people I spoke to prefer to come to Cócorit because it is their original home town and they have family there, many also pointed out that they could go to any Yaqui community, including those across the national border, and be accepted to perform there. There are also descriptions of the Easter being performed with few people by a group of Yaquis working in a place too far away to return to the pueblo (Savala 1980: 52-3).

The requirements to perform in certain roles have to do with gender and there are some restrictions on age. For example, the *Angelitos* are children; the Chapayekas must be mature, married men. Besides that, there are no specific requirements as to the social position of the performers. The conventional forms which create distinctive and important social features of Yaqui ritual, are the manda, ritual kinship, and the concept of *tekipanoa*, ritual labor. These are the conventions that relate an individual to the ritual system and transform them into the ceremonial societies through which the different principles of power are represented.

Tekipanoa means work, especially labor done for religious ceremonies. "*Es muy trabajoso la religion de nosotros*" (our religion is a lot of work) is a statement Spicer felt was repeated so often, it might have been regarded as a saying (Spicer 1940: 264-5). It is true that Yaqui ritual is taxing, requiring hours of marching and singing, in the hot sun and as well as in the cold dark night. It is often remarked that performing as a Chapayeka is especially hard. There is a value placed on working hard to the point of exhaustion. While the Yaquis do not seem to value suffering as such, they do emphasize having endured and survived many hardships, also as a people. Kirstin Erickson speaks of how Yaqui women are proud of being able to give birth without complaining of the pain (Erickson 2008: 79).

Lutes says that Yaqui ritual requires a high degree of altruism, as it requires the sacrifice of time, effort, and other resources from all those involved. Ritual performance is considered as public service to community, and it is said to give a special feeling of satisfaction (Lutes 1983: 90). He also notes that the power that is manifest in ritual is intensely felt by the performers. Lutes describes feeling exhausted but deeply satisfied after performing as a Pascola (ibid. 88).

Although the performers acknowledge the hard work involved, they also speak about the pleasure and strength they get from the rituals. The emphasis is more on being able to bear and even enjoy the ordeal than suffering from it. A Chapayeka I spoke to said that the work makes him want to keep going, that he wouldn't want to stop. There are also cases of performers who suffer from physical difficulties that should make it difficult if not impossible to perform, yet are able to do so each year.

A manda is a vow, a commitment to perform a specific ritual duty. A person can make one him or herself, or on behalf of another, usually parents for a child. After a manda to perform as a member of a ceremonial society is made to the ritual authorities, there is an initiation. A manda is usually for three years or life. Multiples of three are also known, such as six or nine years

(Painter 1986: 123,127, field notes). Among the Chapayekas it is common for the members to be promised for life, and many of them continue to serve without a manda after fulfilling a shorter one (field notes, Maria Trinidad Ruiz Ruiz, personal communication). There are also smaller ritual actions that are said to be "by manda," such as putting ribbons on the Judas effigy that is burned on Holy Saturday, or walking on one's knees to the altar from a specific point. Mandas are often made in cases of illness or misfortune as part of the reciprocal interaction and communication between a person and the deities. Not all mandas are for specific misfortunes, a manda can be a general part of a person's tekipanoa. A religious person would hold a fiesta in his house and in other ways do what he can for the ceremonies. One performs ritual duty by performing, or by providing something, like the use of a horse, for the performance. (field notes, Painter 1985: 95).

Fulfilling a manda is considered important, although there is flexibility as to when and where. One may begin his manda, then take time off and finish it later. I heard several people talk about mandas they hadn't yet fulfilled and felt they should perform, but I never heard anyone say this about another person. One man had been promised by his late father to perform a role in the Easter ritual. He said he didn't know when he would do it, but said several times he wanted to keep his word. Painter mentions a belief that failure to fulfill a manda would be met with supernatural punishment (Painter 1985: 128-9).

The main thing is to perform tekipanoa, there is no hierarchy of value for the different cargos. Although Yaqui rituals and the yearly ritual cycle depend on the cosmological oppositions between the ceremonial groups, for an individual the oppositions do not reflect social divisions in non-ritual life. A person may perform in various groups, be a godparent and at times a spectator. One may fulfill any or all of these roles in any given year. One Chapayeka continued as a Matachini after the Fariseos had been defeated. Another one took his mask off and walked with the people in the procession for the funeral konti of Jesus. Later he continued as a Chapayeka. The line between participation and being a spectator is not absolute, either. Many people participate in small ways, they go to touch the figure of Jesus during the vigil in the church, get an ash cross on their foreheads and get palm leaves. This kind of participation, as well as joining the procession, is also considered a contribution to the collective ritual effort. A young woman described going on the konti processions as "accompanying the Virgin" giving a sense of being in the presence of the Virgin, a reciprocal relation of giving her support and receiving blessings. Besides the performers, few people attend all parts of the

ritual or hang around between rites. They attend to their duties of home and work and participate in the ritual when they can or wish to do so.

There are many things happening in various places at the same time during the Easter ritual. No-one can see all of it in one year. An individual may take many different paths through the ritual. For example, an infant is taken by his or her parents to see parts of the ritual they think are important or might amuse the child, such as the Chapayekas. Older children move in groups, often following the Chapayekas. An adult would usually follow the procession with Jesus or Mary. An older person might stay in the church all day. Another person might never enter the church but follow the processions. Many have seen the rituals since childhood and this way know what is going on at all times. In general people are well aware of the events going on in other places.

The feeling is a mix of social event and devotion. People spoke of the rites as a way to worship, but they admitted they enjoyed the events for their aesthetic or entertaining qualities and said things like, "it's beautiful, I always tell them to come and watch this part." The general feeling is one of enjoyment, except the quiet and somber part after the crucifixion, when there is a procession with the body of Christ and a vigil in the church. Correct behavior is expected and enforced. Other parts, such as the running of the *Viejito* or the race after the encuentro, are more rowdy. The amount of spectators and who they are varies for different parts. Although the Chapayekas are generally popular, at some points – such as during the Chapayeka relays – only children are there to watch them. No part requires the presence of spectators, only the performers. I have heard Córorit criticized for the amount of people there, that the crowds are too much, you can't see anything, and it isn't as peaceful as the other Yaqui towns. As Córorit is the town closest to, and easiest to access from, the near-by towns and city, there are also people who only come to watch, and do not have a personal connection to the town. In 2007 there were even short visits by organized tourist groups. At the same time, it seems that the vast majority of the people present are linked to the community by social relations, probably most often kinship ties.

### **Ritual kinship**

The system of ritual kinship has been described as extremely important for the Yaquis. For all ritual occasions, a Yaqui receives godparents, who have specific duties according to the occasion. In the final ritual occasion, the funeral, all the godparents participate. In the U.S. the godparent system has acted as an alternative kinship system. Many Yaquis arrived in Arizona by ones and twos, from many different towns, and only later as families (Spicer



1940: 20, 27). The godparents also became related to each other and the relation entailed life-long obligations (Spicer 1940: 91, 95). This is also described for other Yaqui pueblos in Sonora. The ritual kinship ties also create marriage restrictions. Godparents to a person in a given situation can not be married to each other, and a person may not marry someone who is his or her godparent or co-godparent. (Erickson 2008: 116-7, Olavarria 2003: 191, 195).

In Cócorit during my fieldwork the consequences of the ritual kinship system seemed to be more limited. The people I talked to said a godparent's duties were limited to certain ritual duties and obligations did not extend to the other godparents, although the relation was recognized. "Somos comadres, nada mas" (we're co-godmothers, that's all). Of course the ritual kinship could indicate or encourage a closer relationship, but it seemed to carry no automatic obligation. Some Chapayekas even had no godparents, and "did it alone." Whoever performs the duty of a godparent is considered a godparent, if only for that part of the ceremony. For example, one young woman's relative asked her to "be his godmother" during Holy week in 2006, apparently on that day just before the rituals. She performed the necessary duties on that day, but did not perform further godmother duties. A woman who was the godmother of a Chapayeka told me that she took care of her duties as a godmother for three years, and then the Chapayeka might ask her to do it again. At the end of Easter, she said she "returned him back to his wife" and said that she would have no further duties until the funeral, when family members are not allowed to touch the body.

In ritual, the obligations and duties of godparents are the same in Cócorit as elsewhere. The Angelitos's godparents take the child to the church and accompany him or her during the rituals and help to defend him or her from the Chapayekas. The Chapayekas's godparents are an important part of the ceremony. They whip the Chapayekas on Miercoles de tinieblas, bring them food during Holy Week, and perhaps most importantly, the godparents help the Chapayekas make the return to society at the end. On Holy Saturday, the godparents take the Chapayekas to breakfast before the Judas konti that marks their coming demise. Then during the Gloria the godparents take the regalia off the Chapayekas and Cabos little by little and then take them into the church to be blessed. On Sunday the godparents take the Chapayekas to the church again and then hand them over to their families. This way they mediate between the liminal ritual state and non-ritual life.

### **The ceremonial groups**

The Yaqui ritual year is thought of as being divided according to the ceremonial group that is in charge; the Fariseos “own” the time of Lent and Easter, and the rest of the year belongs to the Matachinis. All the Yaqui ritual performers take part in the Easter ritual. As a liminal period of renewal, an end and a beginning, it is also the only event to bring all the societies together, organize their relations and through them, the cosmology. The groups who perform at Easter, the Fariseos, pilatos and Caballeros, do not appear in other rituals, and the Matachinis and the deer group only appear at the very end of Easter, indicating a return to the other period. The appointed civil authorities give up their power for Easter. The ceremonial societies in Cócorit are the same as have been described in the literature (Olavarría 2003, Painter 1986, Spicer 1940). Each group has specifically defined tasks, and all parts of the ritual are done with the participation of several groups. I will here give a brief description of the groups, their actions and relations will become clearer in the description of the ritual. The Chapayekas are described in the next chapter.

#### *The church group*

The church group represents the church and the Christian deities and, together with the spectators who join the processions, the people of the pueblo. The church group consists of the Rezantes, or Maestros, who lead the prayers, singing, and processions, the Cantoras who sing, the men and women who prepare the images and carry them, the flag girls, and the Angelitos, children dressed as angels, who walk in the processions and sit at the altar. The Maestros were usually referred to as Rezantes in Cócorit. There is a lot of learning involved for them, as they have to know the texts to the songs and lead the rituals (Spicer 1940: 119-120). In this sense it is a longer and more demanding career than other memberships. “A Maestro knows how to lead any ceremony” (ibid.117)

The children wear white dresses and angel wings on their back. They wear leaves on their head and carry palm branches. The Angelitos and Chapayekas are connected in that they are the only ones to be initiated during Lent, but at the same time the Angelitos are the conceptual opposite of the Chapayekas. When the angels come to the church with their godparents, the Chapayekas may attack them within the space from the main cross to the church door. If the Chapayekas are busy, they let the angels arrive in peace.

The Rezantes wear sandals and normal pants and collared shirts, not necessarily white as most performers during Lent. The Cantoras wear blouses and skirts, often with flowers, and rebozos. They wear regular shoes,

sometimes sandals. Some wear the traditional Yaqui clothing made of white cotton with very beautiful colourful embroideries of flowers. In Córorit, I only saw these worn during the rituals.

The man who represents Jesus as the Viejito is usually barefoot and shirtless, with white pants usually rolled to the knees. In the U.S. there is no person set apart to represent Jesus; in a moment of ritual inversion, the role is taken by a Chapayeka with a viejito mask. According to Spicer in Sonora this would traditionally have been done by a respected elderly man (Spicer 1980: 83, see also Painter 1985: 438). In Córorit, however, the two men I have seen taking on this role were young. Another young man (in his early 20s) said he was considering offering himself for the role. According to Olavarria, in other towns also today it is the norm for the Viejito to be portrayed by a young man (Olavarria 2003: 164).

The men and women carrying the images wear collared shirts and pants and blouses and skirts respectively, the women who carry the large Virgin wear headdresses, and the men who carry the bier with the body of Christ wear white sheets that cover the head and body. At certain times in the ritual they go barefoot.

#### *The Caballeros*

Apart from the church group, the ceremonial societies are organized in a military fashion. The Caballeros are "the cavalry." The Caballeros wear collared button down shirts and pants with boots. They carry lances or metal swords. At first, the Caballeros are aligned with the Fariseos, but change in the course of the ritual and take the side of the church in the end.

#### *The Fariseos*

The Fariseos consist of the Pilates, the Fariseo officers, the drummer and flutist, the Chapayekas, and the Cabos. In the Yaqui Easter Pontius Pilate is the leader of the Fariseos and the one who actually commits the act of executing Jesus by piercing his side with a lance. It is sometimes said Pilate is supposed to be blind, and the other Fariseos have to point him in the right direction and keep him from ducking out at the moment of killing Jesus, but when the blood of Jesus hits his eyes he regains his vision (Buitimes Flores 2009). Pilate wears a black cape with embroidery on the back. He wears a black scarf over his face and a black hat, and black boots with big silver spurs. Pilate carries a lance (that kills Jesus) that is covered with a cloth; the color varies according to the parts of ritual. He rides a horse during the processions.

The Cabos stay with the Chapayekas to guard and assist them. Sometimes the Cabos also have to try to control and herd the Chapayekas or indicate where they should go and what they should do, as the Chapayekas can be quite unruly. The Cabos are more sober, more attending to the business at hand. They are both like servants to the Chapayekas, there to help them, as well as their guards who make the Chapayekas do what they're supposed to. The Cabos, and other Fariseos besides the Chapayekas, wear white shirts, pants, hats and Yaqui sandals, and during holy week, black hats and black capes over these. Often there are flowers painted on the hats, and the capes may have fringes, borders or other simple decoration. They all carry wooden swords and knives, like those of the Chapayekas. Some of the Cabos are very young, less than ten years old. As men may not serve as Chapayekas until they're mature, those promised to the Chapayekas society will serve as Cabos until they're old enough and married.

#### *The Matachinis*

The Matachinis dance at the end of Easter. They are the main ritual group the rest of the year, and are considered the army of Mary. They are opposed to the Chapayekas. A Chapayeka performer put it like this: the Chapayeka is born, the Matachini dies. In the end, the Chapayekas die, and the Matachinis return (interview 2006). In the Easter the Matachinis appear only after the Gloria and the unmasking. They wear sandals or shoes, pants and collared shirts. The most important part of their wear is the headdress. The Matachinis have their own music and dances. On Holy Saturday they dance in the church and outside it on the Glory way.

#### **The church and konti**

The Yaqui Easter ritual takes place according to the Catholic ritual calendar. The first day of ceremony is Ash Wednesday, after that there is a procession on each of the next six Fridays. During Holy Week, there are rituals from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. The central space of the ritual is the church, the plaza in front of it, and the "konti" that surrounds the church. On certain days, the ritual is extended across the territory to individual households and other towns. The konti is a part of the plan of the town, it is a circular road that goes around the church (see figure 4). Satellite maps show similar patterns in other Yaqui towns as well. Konti in Yaqui means the way of the cross as the actual road, and also refers to the act of surrounding as in 'performing konti' (Spicer 1980: 99, Erickson 2008: 122). The konti processions are an essential part of a Yaqui town. A very important aspect of Yaqui ritual is

to transform space, to make it sacred, through performance. Places that are significant, but not concretely present are the different anias, and other realms, such as the United States, aspects of the modern world, and Mexico as a political state. At times these encroach on the ritual in the form of passing police cars, or as mediated by the Chapayekas. Kristin Erickson points out that ritual also transforms space by taking “the Yaqui people from the margins of the nation to a symbolic center” (Erickson 2008: 123). Even though places, like the United States, are in the everyday life a powerful force, in the ritual they are defined from a different point of view.

I was told that the Conty church was built about a hundred years ago, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It seems that these days it is not used much, and Easter is definitely the most important time. The church is called *el Espíritu Santo* (the Holy Spirit). The church consists of the rectangular church hall and a small room on the left hand side of the altar, where figures and other objects are kept. There is an altar in front, with a painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe. There is another altar on the side. Figures of Jesus, St. John, and the Virgin are placed on the altars. At certain points of the ritual a small table is set close to the altar. The walls are painted white. There are no pews, but movable chairs and benches are kept on the sides, most of the time people stand. The space in the middle is kept free for the ceremonies. There is a door on each side and a larger door at the end, through which the performers enter.

Outside, there is a wooden cross about 15 meters from the church door. About 90 meters from the door are three crosses. These crosses are in place all year. The three crosses mark the first station of the way of the cross and also a kind of gate; this is where the Chapayekas make their entrance when they join the ritual. For Easter, 13 more stations along the konti are made with small wooden crosses.

### **Conclusions: flexibility in participation, stability in religion**

In practice, religion is always local and Christianity makes no exception, despite the canonized texts and centralized administration. Images, ideas, texts and practices are interpreted and reinvented within the local community. At the same time there are both local and global processes of discourse, metadiscourse, and practice that aim to keep the religious conventions. In Catholicism there is a hierarchy of authority reaching down from the Holy See in the Vatican, within which orthodoxy is negotiated. Although the Yaquis consider themselves to be Catholics, they have not been fully a part of this hierarchy since the Jesuits left. They have their own system of command, hierarchies of knowledge and processes to determine the correct forms. In the

form of the Bible they share the same sacred text as other Catholics. From the Yaqui point of view, they received their religion directly from Jesus and the Virgin Mary, not the Jesuits (Painter 1986: 75).

Yaqui narratives and rituals reflect aspects of the cosmology, which is fully recreated in the Easter ritual. The time and place of the crucifixion, the realms of *huya ania* and *yo'ania*, as well as contemporary society are all a part of the enactment of the Easter ritual. The cosmology includes the past of the Yaquis, an acknowledgement of a point of radical change, as well as accounting for the current co-existence of different realms. A very distinct feature of Yaqui religion is the ubiquitousness of tricksters and clowns. The deer appears with the *Pascola*, Jesus in myths is accompanied by St. Peter, and in the Easter drama he is faced by the *Chapayekas*. Yaqui cosmology, religion, and ritual are about the channeling of power. The clowns and tricksters are important parts of this.

Many analyses aim to separate the Christian and indigenous or pre-Christian elements (see for example Moctezuma Zamarrón 2007, Painter 1986, Spicer 1980). However, this is not a simple task. Elements that could be labelled as Christian, indigenous, or part of the secular everyday world of non-Yaquis are related to, and separated from, or opposed to each other at different phases. As styles, roots, ideology, or identity, indigenous as opposed to Spanish origins are at certain times meaningful within certain contexts. Ultimately they form a coherent whole in terms of experiencing the ritual. Of course there are many ways in which the Yaqui forms have deviated from the forms and dogma taught to them by the Jesuits. The Catholic faith has been embraced, put into a Yaqui framework, and embedded in a different world view. The conventions passed on by the Jesuits have been reinvented.

In terms of gaining an understanding of the religion today, it seems that action is more important than talk. For the people in Cócorit, it seemed to be more important to participate in than to be able to give interpretations of the rituals. Children were instructed on how to behave, where to stand and what to look at, but not given verbal explanations of the events. Questions were usually given brief and matter-of-fact responses. Not all the people – perhaps very few – who participate in the Easter ritual in Cócorit would know Yaqui mythology or the details of ritual knowledge held by, for example, the *Rezantes*. Most people, however, expect explanations for the details of the ritual to exist. The older, more experienced people are thought to know these things. During my field work, if the person I was talking to didn't know an answer to my questions I was always reassured that so-and-so would know. Participation in the ritual does not require conscious knowledge of the other

tropes that are related to the ritual, but knowledge of how to behave, and an awareness of the different beings, the events, and their sequence. Many aspects of Yaqui religion are very stable. The ceremonial groups, the *manda*, and the conventional side of the rituals are very consistent over time and in different communities. These conventions mediate between religion and non-ritual society and this makes actual participation flexible. At the same time, the following of these conventions makes the individuals into a *Yaqui* society. People are classified, ordered and opposed when they become members of the ceremonial societies. In a kind of inversion of Turner's (1969) model of structure and *communitas*, the ceremonial societies are structure and non-ritual Yaqui life is *communitas*, when the focus is on a relatively undifferentiated common bond. As dialectical poles, each recreates the other. On the next level, the ceremonial societies and actual cosmic power become the poles of a dialectic mediated by the ritual. In ritual, the continuity comes from the powers and principles being opposed, as a trope it is a model of the cosmology. This way the ritual makes for continuity of the conventional core or basis of culture.

## Chapter 3

### The Chapayekas as a Ceremonial Group

The Chapayekas are part of the Fariseos, but they stand out as a separate group in looks, performance, and their mythological associations. In many ways, the Chapayekas can be treated as a unified group, but there are differences between them. The most important example is the mask and the different types of Chapayekas distinguished by mask type. As all but two masks are burned, and new masks are made every year, change is inevitable. The masks associated with certain types change and new masks are introduced, some of which become new, conventional types. Except for the masks, the way the Chapayekas look has not changed over the period covered by ethnography or local memory. Although the masks and weapons are burned, other parts are used year after year.

The Chapayeka is especially striking in its appearance of all the figures in the Easter ritual. The mask and the blanket that covers their upper body make the figures look larger than human. The mask, along with the distinctive movement, lack of speech, and the seemingly endless marching and rhythmic knocking together of the knife and sword give the figures a strange and inhuman air. Although the masks are exaggerated, they are surprisingly expressive. The masks are very detailed and well made, and easily create the effect of a man with an animal head, or that Shrek or Popeye really has entered the town. Only the hands and feet in Yaqui sandals are human in appearance.

Some of the basic clothing was shared by all ritual performers, other were only worn by the Chapayekas or specific types of Chapayekas. All male ritual performers generally wore a white collared button down shirt and white pants, a rosary, hat, scarf and Yaqui sandals. One or two had clothing other than white. This is how the performers were dressed when they arrived at the church. The Chapayekas carried their blanket, rattles, belt and scarves wrapped up in a bundle. They went first to the church, made the sign of the cross at the altar and greeted the figures, and then went to the headquarters. After greeting the people who had already arrived, they put on everything except the mask and the weapons at the headquarters cross. This is the way the Chapayekas usually waited for the rituals to begin, or did the preparatory work for the ritual. This also made the Chapayeka performers instantly distinguishable even while there were no rituals going on. In 2007 after a Fariseo officer drowned in the canal, the Chapayekas watched dressed like this while the diver searched for the body.



The first time a Chapayeka arrived and begun his Easter performance, he would arrive, with mask on, by the "gate" formed by the three crosses. Some got fully dressed at some other place, such as their home if it was near enough, but I also saw some go first to the headquarters and then leave, put the mask on outside the konti area and then arrive by the gate. After the first entrance, the mask was always put on and taken off at the headquarters. After the Chapayeka had begun his performance, the mask and the weapons were kept at the church. The Chapayekas had a big silky scarf to put on the head and a smaller bandana type to tie around the waist. Often the scarves were red in color and had a picture of the Virgin, although I also saw ones decorated with spots, butterflies, and other designs.

The Chapayekas put on and removed their masks usually lying on the ground on their sides. A Cabo was often near to help, holding the performer's scarf and hat. Sometimes, a Chapayeka needed to take his mask off momentarily during performance and did so crouching down. Cabos helped him by giving cover, but if no one was around the performer would use cover provided by, for example, a bush. The same is described in the earlier ethnography (Painter 1986: 221).

Most Chapayeka performers I saw wore scarves at least partly covering their faces while not wearing the mask. The scarf was given various explanations. It was said to offer protection from the changes of temperature when the mask is taken off or put on, but it was also said to protect the performer from witches by hiding his identity (field notes). In Yaqui ritual the idea of anonymity is not strictly upheld, but there is a sort of pretence that no one knows who is behind the mask. There are whispers of "that is my uncle," "there goes my neighbor." An elderly Cantora pointed out her son to me with the characteristic discreetness after we had talked for only a few minutes. A similar thing has been described in other Yaqui towns (Maria Trinidad Ruiz Ruiz, personal communication). The point is not that people really do not know who the person is, but that individual identity ought to be submerged in the meanings of the ritual.

### **Transformation of the performer**

Putting on the mask and picking up the weapons is the definitive point of transformation. The performer's stance changes, his behavior changes, and also the way he is treated by others changes. For example, godparent terminology is not used when the Chapayeka is wearing the mask (Painter 1986: 213). The Chapayeka with a mask on is a very different being from the performer without his mask. A young woman described watching her brother

put his Chapayeka gear and finally mask on in preparation to begin his service on Easter, saying that it is like he is no longer her brother, but some strange and foreign being. The Chapayekas can be quite frightening. There is something unreal about them, and many figures look aggressive, rather than funny or friendly. The ones whose masks looked like circus clowns were exaggerated; the eyes and smiles looked more psychotic than cheerful. The animals had their teeth showing.

Once the mask went on, the Chapayeka's physical habitus changed notably. The Chapayekas stood and moved with their knees slightly bent and inclined their upper body slightly forward. The stance and different way of moving create a different energy. This is part of what gives the Chapayeka his air of energy and unpredictability. Eugenio Barba speaks of the performer's energy and the way it is created through an "extra-daily use of the body." The body as it is used in performance is not the same as in daily life. Through altering principles such as breathing and balance, the expression of the body is altered. (Barba 1995: 15).

The characteristic Chapayeka stance itself serves as an example of extra-daily techniques seen in other traditions as well: bending the knees slightly and inclining the upper body forward is reminiscent of other dance and theater techniques. This gives the performer a stance from which it is easy to react and move. Another feature of the performance of the Chapayekas is shared by classical mime: using the principles of equivalence and opposition to transform a normal or daily action into performance (Barba and Savarese 1991: 96). For example, a Chapayeka pretending to pull a rope might, instead of leaning back against the rope with straight arms, lean forward, bend his arms and pull his elbows back to create a dynamic pose without actually pulling.

Although there is no formal training for the Chapayekas, they learn through observation. Besides certain marching rhythms, there are no complicated steps or movements required as part of the conventions of Chapayeka performance, but there is nevertheless a lot of uniformity to the physical movements. What I saw in Sonora also matched the photographs from Arizona taken in the 1930s and the film shot of the Easter ritual in Arizona in 1938-1940. In Mexico much ritual performance that might be classified as walking or marching according to Western notions is considered dance, and the physical aspects of performance are paid attention to and learned. Many of the men who perform as Chapayekas also dance Matachini or Pascola; they are skilled in the use of extra-daily techniques.

### **The mask**

The mask is the most distinctive part of the Chapayeka clothing and very different from all other objects used in Yaqui ritual. The Chapayeka mask is considered to have agency of its own. This makes it unique in Yaqui ritual items, and it is thought to be potentially very dangerous if handled without taking the necessary precautions. The performers must protect themselves by handling the mask correctly, not speak or cough with the mask on and keep the cross of their Yaqui rosary in their mouths while wearing the mask. If the performer fails to protect himself, there could be very serious consequences. There are stories of the mask becoming stuck to the face or cutting the performer. The worst possible fate is that the performer becomes a Chapayeka ghost, doomed to walk the konti forever (see also Painter 1986: 222). On the other hand, if the performer treats the mask right and protects it, it helps and guides the performer. The mask is also called *sewa*, flower, which is symbolic of the blood of Jesus and great blessings (Painter 1986: 212).

Making of a mask is a controlled affair, which women are not supposed to see. Before the masks were made in the monte, but these days it is considered to be too dangerous. A Chapayeka performer told me about how he makes his mask alone in a room in his house, with a candle burning. Nobody must disturb him. If someone comes to ask for him, he has instructed the other people in the household to say he is not home. Sometimes the performers make their masks together, and they may talk, but it is quiet and respectful talk. If a performer is not able to make his own mask, someone else may make it for him. The main materials are cow or goat hide, wood and paint. The basic form is the hide folded and sewn with strips of hide into a helmet form that covers the entire head. The ears are also made of hide. The ears and face are scraped clean of hair and painted. The nose and mouth are made of wood and sewn onto the mask. Often beards are added. Sometimes the whole face may be made of wood, or additional features such as the round cheeks for the mask depicting the cartoon character Memín Pinguín are added. Hair may be made of horse or cow hair, or synthetic materials. Cardboard may also be used, for example to make hats.

Chapayeka means “long-nosed.” Traditionally the masks have big ears and long, pointed noses. The Chapayekas also represent Roman soldiers, and sometimes their strange looks are said to come from the moment when Jesus replaces the soldier's ear, that Peter has cut off, but accidentally puts it on backwards. (Painter 1986: 234; Spicer 1980: 78). According to Painter in earlier times the masks were worn on top of the head facing backwards when the Chapayekas were doing the manual work for the rituals. Painter mentions that

sometimes if a man is suffering from a cold he may carry the mask on a sword. (1986: 220). I did not, however, see this.

Every year on the Saturday of Glory, all but two Chapayeka masks (and the corresponding weapons) are burned, along with the weapons, the left over materials for making the masks, and many other belongings of the Chapayekas. The two masks will be used if there are any funerals for Chapayeka performers, and can also be said to be “seed” for next year (Schechner 1997: 176). A Fariseo officer decides which masks will be saved for funerals. It is said that they should be of the traditional type (Painter 1986: 220, field notes). There are conflicting statements as to what is done with the mask in a funeral. According to Painter the mask is used in the funeral ceremony, but not buried with the deceased:

“if a mask has been used in a death ceremony it cannot be worn again by a Chapayeka, but it may be put on the *malhumor*, the figure of Judas the following year. If a mask is on hand that has not been used in a death ceremony, it may be worn by someone who comes late and has no time to make one. It cannot, however, be worn by its original owner, as “it is his head that has been cut off, so naturally he cannot use it again.”” (ibid. 220).

Spicer says that the deceased is buried with the mask beside him (Spicer 1954: 92). When I asked, I was told by some that the mask is burned after the funeral, and by others, that the mask is used in the funeral but not buried with the deceased. In any case, it is important to use the ritual objects that the deceased has formerly used in the funeral. This way God will know about the ritual work that has been performed.

### **Choosing the character**

The figure represented in the mask has been chosen and approved before the performer enters the ritual. The process of choosing the figure to be portrayed is a combination of personal taste and established rules – invention and convention. A person who wants to be a Chapayeka has to first make a *manda* to perform as a Chapayeka. He, or the one who made the *manda* for him, tells the authorities, chooses godparents, and the Chapayeka is initiated at Easter. A Chapayeka may be initiated as a child, but he may not perform as a Chapayeka until he is an adult and married. Until then, he may perform as a *Cabo*. These are the only restrictions, any mature male may perform as a Chapayeka. Olavarria (2003: 157) points out that only Chapayekas and Angelitos are initiated at Easter, and that these are the only rites of passage that should, ideally, take place during this liminal time. I watched an initiation

of two young boys as Chapayekas taking place at Loma de Guamuchil, and for this occasion they carried Chapayeka masks, but did not at any point wear them.

After choosing the figure he wants to represent the Chapayeka performer must ask permission from the appropriate authorities. If the figure he has chosen is part of an existing type, such as the circus clowns, he also has to ask permission from the “owner of the mask” in this case the elder clown, who also decides how many clowns there can be in total. The performer must also get permission from the ritual authorities. According to a Chapayeka who has been performing for a long time, there is no limit to the possible figures, only that they must be males. New figures are quickly picked up from movies and television. For example, on my visit to the Pascua reservation in Arizona I was told that Shrek had been seen represented in a mask there.

The performer may not ignore the conventional aspects of getting the proper authorization and observing the rules of making the mask in a proper way from proper materials, but the choosing of a character can be relatively more conventionalizing or innovating. Choosing a well established character would be an example of conventionalization. Conversely, introducing a new character would be an act of differentiation, an innovative extension of established convention. At the same time, the more conventional mask types have differentiating, individual features, such as in the colors and decorations.

Once the figure has been approved, the performer has to keep the same figure for three years before he may change. When I asked how the Chapayeka performers had chosen the figure to represent, I was usually told that the mask type caught their attention, or they “felt like it.” Personal inclination – albeit without much consciousness as to why exactly – was the usual reason given. No-one said, for example, that they wanted to use a figure someone they knew used. One of the Chapayekas I talked to had chosen the orejona mask because it would be easier for an inexperienced performer. The performance is partly shaped by the figure portrayed in the mask. The ones whose masks look like circus clowns, for example, are expected to be very active. The performer is said to “*da vida al cuero*,” give life to the skin, and each mask has its “*gracia*,” its trick. (Interview with Chapayeka performer).

### **The different types of masks**

It appears there are more mask types in existence today than before, although there are many described in the earlier literature, and the masks seem to have always reflected the contemporary context. Painter, whose material is from Arizona from the 1930s to the 1970s, mentions two humanoid masks with

long ears: one called *naka'ara* or old type, and Yori or Mexican as another kind of long eared mask. The other major type of mask she describes depicted animals, birds, or butterflies. The animals that were mentioned were the bull, goat, ram, rabbit, dog, burro, monkey, and bat. Different kinds of humans and other non-Yaquis were also depicted. In addition there was always also one "viejito" (who did the running of the Viejito), gamblers, hobos, apaches, a sheriff, a ghost, and a devil. A king mask she says was talked about but not seen much. The masks were decorated with flowers, stars, and also animalitos, insects, lizards and other small creatures. One Yaqui told her that the men didn't like to have animalitos, because the others would try to hit and kill them. Painter points out that the beings depicted in the masks were not seen as particularly atrocious and should not be taken as scapegoats that represent negative things. (Painter 1986: 214-218).

Spicer, who worked in both Sonora and Arizona around the same time as Painter, also mentions the *naka'ara*, as well as masks depicting animals, such as the bull, rabbit, and badger. He says there were no sheep, goats, or horses. Certain masks he says represent Roman soldiers, as well as Mexican soldiers, and according to Spicer, "this form represents evil beings." Spicer also mentions hoboos and apaches, saying that they are also a representation of evil. (Spicer 1980: 112). Olavarria's more recent ethnography from Sonora mentions the traditional masks as representing "white men," and several other mask types. According to her, in 1996 the younger Chapayekas in Loma de Guamuchil also included two clowns, a pirate, Memín Pinguín, a punk with a mohawk, a *cholo* and two apaches. (Olavarria 2003: 160).

In Sonora today the mask that is considered "traditional" is called "orejona," big-eared. This is probably the same type as the one called long-eared in previous literature. The "traditional" type masks have changed quite a bit within the time that has been ethnographically documented. The masks have become much more human like from the ones described and shown in photos in earlier ethnographies.

Based on my observations and comments from performers and participants, I have divided the Chapayeka masks into several groups. 1) The traditional, or orejona, mask. There are two variations, based on the face and ear form. 2) The *viejito*, which means an old man, but in the context of Chapayeka masks is used to designate most human-type masks. These include humanoid masks with crowns, called *reyes*, kings. 3) The clowns, whose masks are like the make-up of a circus clown, 4) animal figures 5) apaches and 6) *cholos*, bad guys. These could be a contemporary version of the tramps and hoboos mentioned in earlier literature. In addition there are several individual

characters, such as the devil, the vampire, Chucky, and Popeye. Some Chapayekas fit easily into categories, others are more ambiguous.

The orejonas and animals wear blankets over their shirt and pants, the others wear coats or capes. All Chapayekas and Cabos carry a wooden knife in the left hand and a longer sword in the right hand. The knife has a loop of cord and can be hung on the wrist, allowing the Chapayekas free use of the hand. The sword and knife are usually white with colorful designs. The lines and designs represent rank, but may also have to do with the individual figure, for example, the horse had horseshoes painted on his weapons. Painter (1986: 218) mentions playing cards painted on the sword of a Chapayeka portraying a gambler. There is an endless amount of detail to the Chapayeka costumes that is difficult to describe completely. At this point I will give a short indication of each group's typical performance, but I will give more detailed examples in the course of the description of the ritual to place them into context.

### **Chapayekas in Cócorit 2004, 2006 and 2007**

In 2004, 2006 and 2007 by Holy Week there were several dozen Chapayekas. In 2007 there was a total of 55 Chapayekas, not counting one who was relieved of his duties before Holy Week.

#### *Orejonas*

The orejonas were the most numerous. This seems to have been the case in Arizona in the 20th century as well (Deshon Carré 1993: 141). The faces on orejona masks were painted in different colors; I saw brown, white, red, pink and blue. Some of the faces were very human, others less so. All had a crown on top of the mask, usually made of cardboard. Some had one or two plumes on their heads. All of the masks had open mouths, the teeth showing, some had a tongue that stuck out. Some of the orejonas had beards made of horse or cow hair. All had large ears, some were very ornamental. There were often flowers on the ears, usually of the same color as the face. Sometimes the ears were decorated with triangles or other designs. If the ears were shaped like butterfly wings, the mask was called *mariposa*, butterfly. All the orejonas had blankets and rattles on their ankles. The movement of the orejonas varied the most of all the Chapayeka types. Some were quite active; others carried out the conventional actions and did not clown much.

For example, the first Chapayeka in 2007 had a traditional orejona mask. His face was pink; he had big teeth and big eyes. He had a long dark beard. On his ears were pink roses. His blanket was mostly red, with a plaid

pattern. It was said the blankets should be at least mostly red, and many, but not all, were. On his sword there were blue, green, and red triangles.

### *Viejitos and reyes*

These mask types were generally more human looking than the orejonas. Viejitos, "old men," had round ears and wore an overcoat instead of a blanket. Figures that portrayed humans, but were not kings, were generally considered part of the viejito category, even if they were also identified as something more specific, such as "the president of the United States." The rey, or king, -type had round ears, a crown and a blanket, with a pink or red face. I did however see a Chapayeka who had a crown, an overcoat, and gaiters. At first I couldn't tell if the second Chapayeka to appear in 2006 and 2007 was a viejito or a rat. When I asked, he was generally recognized as a human type, but that the mask resembled a rat because of the mask's grey face, pointed nose and big teeth, was acknowledged as well.

The "Texan," (el tejano) as he was referred to, wore a long dark blue coat, on the back of which was written *Cócorit Tribu Yaqui* (Cócorit, Yaqui tribe). He wore gaiters made from bootlegs, cut open and tied in three places with string. He had a leather hat, a beard, a pink face and sunglasses. He had a pointy nose that stuck up and big buck teeth, and actually managed to capture the caricatured look of "an ignorant gringo" very well. Underneath the coat he wore a white shirt and pants. Another viejito figure I was told had been inspired by the Canadian or American pensioners who come down to spend the winter in Arizona. He wore a long light colored coat with U.S. flags sown onto it. He had a long white beard, a pink face and big bulging eyes. There were a couple of viejitos identified as "the president of the U.S." One wore a black coat and a cardboard top hat with stripes. Another president of the U.S. had a blue top hat, pink face and a long light beard, and wore a long black coat. They wore rattles on the ankles. One of the viejitos bore a striking resemblance to Miguel Hidalgo, the hero of the revolution whose statue can be found in every square across Mexico, but I was unable to ascertain whether this was the intended effect. In general the viejitos were not among the most active Chapayekas in terms of clowning, but some had very individual ways of performing the conventional actions. The sheriff wore a light colored long coat, had a pink face, round ears, and a long light colored beard. His sword was cut and painted to look like a rifle with silver paint, and the knife was made to look like a revolver. On his lapel was a round patch with a star, and there was also a star on the rifle. He wore gaiters and a black hat. The sheriff was very bossy, always herding other Chapayekas as well as the spectators onwards.



Sometimes he carried a toy walkie talkie and pretended to confer with some unseen party.

### *Cholos*

The type called cholos is probably similar to the ones identified as hobos in earlier ethnography. Cholo means “bad guys,” delinquents. They wear coats and gaiters, many have the hair scraped off of the top of the mask as well, with natural or synthetic hair made to resemble punk hairstyles. One cholo, present in 2006 and 2007, reminded me of Hulk Hogan because of his pink face, light colored beard and bandana tied across the forehead. I did not, however, hear anyone else call him that. He had a mustache, a tuft of hair on his forehead and at the back of his neck. He had an earring on his left ear, and “*aquí es mi barrio*” (this is my ‘hood) written on his head, the number 13, and a design of thorns, like the thorn crown, painted on his head. On his sword were painted marijuana leaves and a chain. He wore a blue coat and gaiters. Another Cholo wore a light colored coat, with skull patches sown on, carried a chain over one shoulder, and also had an earring in his left ear. He also had a bandana, a Mohawk hairstyle, a mustache, and a beard of light colored hair. Underneath the coat he wore a white shirt, a loosely tied tie, and a vest.

The cholos mostly did not move very much. They performed the conventional actions and were cool and aloof the rest of the time. In 2006 during the kontis, one cholo had a plastic bag he used as if he were sniffing glue.

### *Circus clowns*

Painter says the Chapayekas do not like to be called clowns (Painter 1985: 208). In this light it is interesting that today the masks that are designed to look like circus clowns seem to be quite prevalent. I saw them among the Chapayekas from Loma de Guamuchil, and they exist in other Sonoran towns as well (field notes, Olavarria 2003: 154, 160). In Córorit the clown masks have been in existence for at least 25 years (Interview with Chapayeka performer).

In 2007 there were five clowns in total. The first one to arrive had a red striped cape decorated with blue stars. His face was white; the hair had been left on all of his head, it was long and messy on the crown. He had big eyes, lined with blue and a too big grin, giving a slightly psychotic impression. He wore rattles on the ankles. Another clown with synthetic yellow hair wore a light brown tweed -type jacket with a big colored star on the back. He also had stars painted on his sword. Sometimes he carried a backpack in the shape of a teddybear. His face was huge, with a big bulbshaped red nose, a big round jaw

and a big round forehead. His mouth was fixed in a somehow apologetic lopsided grin. This figure reminded me of Charlie Chaplin, the sad clown. He was often picked on and teased by the other clowns and ended up stomping off in a huff. The third clown wore a black trench coat decorated with a sparkling star on the back. His hair was like that on commercial plastic clown masks, short and frizzy, in hot pink, yellow, and green. He often wore sunglasses on top of his mask and carried a clown doll. He had gaiters with white stars painted on them topped by traditional rattles. The “red striped clown” had a red and white striped cape with red stars and yellow, green and red synthetic hair. His face was white with a circus clown face painted on. The nose was red, the mouth was big and lined in blue. He had ankle rattles. On his sword were painted stars and circles that looked like beach balls. He carried an aluminium box with shoe shining equipment, the box was painted white with small red and green designs on it. The fifth clown had a green and violet cape. He wore a bowler type hat. On his sword were colorful stripes and circles on a white background.

The clowns are among the most active ones. They were always moving and fooling around, mostly with each other. Each had an individual look and personality. “The elf” and “Rambo” also acted in a very similar way to the clowns and interacted a lot with them. A clown can also take the place of another type if needed, to play the part of another kind of Chapayeka (interview with Chapayeka performer).

### *Apaches*

The apaches are called specifically that in Cócorit. Apparently there has been warfare between the Yaquis and the Apaches in earlier times, and they are seen as strong warriors, and an ‘Other’ kind of “Indian.” In 2006 there were two apaches, in 2007 only one, and “Rambo.” One of the apaches was said to be the leader of all the Chapayekas. His face was dark brown with white lines, like war paint. He had long black hair. His sword was yellow, shaped in the form of a bow and he carried a round gourd rattle and a vine of arrows on his back. He wore a large headdress, like a war bonnet, with large grey feathers. He wore leather gaiters on his legs. When the children saw him, they gave a whooping “Indian war call.” The other apache in 2006 only had a couple of feathers. He also wore gaiters. One of the Chapayekas in 2006 and 2007 was said to be “apache” or “indio,” but he was quickly nicknamed “Rambo” by the spectators because of the red bandana he wore across his forehead. Instead of a blanket, like the other apaches, he had a long green overcoat and rattles on his feet. He had a dark brown face, long messy black

hair, a big hooked nose, crossed eyes, and a tongue sticking out. He was very energetic and active, and responsible for a lot of clowning. In 2006 Rambo had a toy mobile phone, which he would pretend to talk into during rituals and use to take pictures.

### *Animals*

Although the animals acted like the animal depicted in the mask as part of their performance, they too had weapons and carried out all the conventional Chapayeka actions. The dog had a wolfish head, pointy ears and a sharp nose. He had a collar with spikes painted white with red tips. The teeth were sharp, also red-tipped. He had a white bone in his mouth and bones painted on his sword. The horse also had an open mouth, with teeth showing, and he wore a bridle. There was also an ape, his sword painted to look like a snake. He had small round eyes and white red tipped teeth. The rooster had rattles on his ankles, teardrop shaped ears, a big yellow beak and beautiful plumes. In 2006 there were two roosters, who were always fighting with each other. Several times the Chapayekas organized an impromptu cock fight with them. In 2006 there was also a skunk, who had a small plastic bottle he used to squirt liquid at people from between his legs. There was also a bull, who would charge at other Chapayekas and the spectators. All the animals wore blankets and most wore gaiters. Not only did the Chapayekas with animal masks approximate the behavior of the animals in their performance, they were also treated like the animal depicted in the mask. For example, I saw an orejona pet and scratch the dog. All were quite aggressive, the horse kicked out, the bull charged, and the dog and the roosters would attack others.

### *Others*

There was also a number of other figures that were recognisable as specific characters. The vampire was there all the years I was present. In 2007 he had a red face, sharp, white, redtipped teeth, a black cape with a red lining and a grey sword with a red tip and bats painted on it. Sometimes the vampire would run holding his cape open, or pull the cape in front of his face in a dramatic gesture like Dracula shielding himself from a cross in the movies. In 2006 he had a small stuffed toy bat; in 2007 he had a small Chapayeka figurine about 15 cm long, with a similar bat mask as his own, attached to his cape.

Chucky was modeled after the murderous doll from the horror movies of the same name. The face was painted to look like Chucky, complete with the stitched up cuts. He wore a black jacket, a green vest and gaiters. His knife was painted to look like a bloody knife and his sword was a yellow snake with

black spots. He would habitually scare children by lunging towards them holding his knife out.

"*El charro*" or "*el Mexicano*" looked like a Mexican cowboy, in mariachi style. The mask had a bald head, over which the charro wore a large cardboard hat with the brim bent up in front. He had a large mustache and a round face. He wore a black jacket and gaiters. He was very interested in the Chapayeka horse, always petting his mane and schooling him by tapping his feet with his sword so the horse would lift his feet. This was at one point taken advantage of by the apache, who came and tapped the horse on the one leg that was still on the ground.

Popeye had an anchor on his hat and on his sword, and a pipe in his crooked mouth. He wore a light colored trench coat and gaiters and often carried a stuffed toy monkey. Popeye had bells on his gaiters, like the elf. When Popeye first arrived and a few times later on, he had candy that he would throw to the kids. "The cannibal" had red eyes, a dark brown face with white lines, and a small skull figurine on the back of his blanket. He had hoops in both ears and a bone in his shoulder length, knotty, black-grey hair. Sometimes he would hold his mostly brown sword like a spear, and take running steps as if to throw it. The devil had a grey sword, shaped to look like a snake with two heads. The snakeheads had small sharp teeth. The devil wore a blanket and gaiters and had a red face and sharp teeth on both the upper and lower jaw, the tips painted red. The devil was very still, he moved less than the others. Many people, including other Chapayekas, said the devil never entered the church, although I did see him enter when the chapayeka lines marched into the church and back.

Other figures in 2006 were a Chapayeka deer dancer, with a blanket, a jeans shirt, a mask that looked like a human head, topped with a deer head that was clearly cruder than the ones used by real deer dancers. His knife and sword were like rattles, and he would move like the deer dancer, the rattles up, taking light steps. Sometimes he would dance a little. The elf (*el duende*) had an impressive mask. He had pointed ears, an extremely wrinkled face, a small mouth with the two front teeth peeking out, and large, sad, hooded eyes. He had a grey pointy hat with two small bells at the tip, and a grey sword with a red tip. He wore a light colored trenchcoat with a small raccoon toy attached to it and bells for buttons. There was also Memín Pinguín, a popular comic book character. This character is also mentioned by Olavarria to have appeared in Loma de Guamuchil (Olavarria 2003: 160). The Memín Pinguín of Cócorit often carried an old video camera and pretended to film both the ritual and the spectators. In 2006 among the Chapayekas of Loma de Guamuchil I saw Kiko,

a figure from the very popular tv-show *el Chavo del Ocho*, and a moor with a high fancy hat. A young man told me his first mask had been Homer Simpson.

### **Movement and communication**

The transformation of the performer into a Chapayeka is completed by putting on the mask. Once the mask is on, the Chapayeka stands up and gives a shake of the hip rattles. From this moment on, he stands differently, walks differently, and often moves in a characteristic jog. Painter was told: "They don't walk like a person, he has to change his step entirely." The name for the Chapayeka trot is *laplape buitekai*. (Painter 1986: 231) When the Chapayekas march, they knock the knife and sword together in rhythm. While they stand, they communicate by knocking the weapons together or to punctuate the singing and the sounds of the flute and drum. This rhythmic knocking sound, together with the sound of shaking the hip rattles is characteristic of the Easter period. There are several different marching rhythms beside the usual quick march, the different rhythms indicate phases in the ritual.

The Chapayeka bends his knees and bends slightly forward from the waist. Because of the mask, the head is kept up, and the Chapayeka cannot turn his head much. To look, he has to turn around completely. The arms, holding the knife and sword, are held slightly in front of the body. The Chapayeka is not tense, but seems energetic, in a position similar to athletes or actors, ready to move or react. The masks are surprisingly expressive, and I certainly agree with Painter's statement that the "accomplished pantomimists are able to make the mask appear to be changing expression" (ibid. 219). The Chapayekas often use their weapons instead of their hands to touch things, but may also use their hands. The knife also has a loop, and can be hung from the wrist to give the performer more use of his hand. The Chapayekas nod in agreement with the whole body, bending all the way from the waist. The gesture of negation is also like a shake of the whole body. The Chapayekas do not move the neck, the movement that would usually only involve the head is communicated to the rest of the body. They do, however, use many gestures that are used by the people in ordinary communication. It's often repeated that a Chapayeka should keep moving, both to stay safe from supernatural harm, and because it's part of the performance.

The Chapayekas have often been described as being new to the world, in a world they do not know. "They give the impression of living in an unrealistic world of their own" (ibid. 236).

"The Chapayekas themselves seem to be witless, nervous, nonhuman beings, not essentially evil. They spend most of their time playing in

foolish ways and chattering to one another... nevertheless their gathering... adds to the increasingly ominous atmosphere..." [...] "The Chapayekas express a single kind of character which contrasts completely with that of their directors...the Chapayekas are inconstant... they convey a sense of stupidity, of questioning and nervousness." (Spicer 1980: 78, 99).

This was certainly observable in their behavior in Cócorit. They regarded everything as something to be examined. Sudden sounds surprised the Chapayekas, making them jump and turn towards the noise. Other things they peered at, using the knife to shield their eyes. For example, a newly arrived Chapayeka needed his leg rattle to be tied. This is something the Chapayeka cannot fix for himself; it must be done by a Cabo. While the Cabo was tying the leg rattle, the Chapayeka, sticking out his leg, leaned back and peered at the Cabo holding his knife up as if to shade his eyes in the characteristic looking pose. As the Chapayekas got more used to their surroundings, they became more confident and quick to react and did not spook as much. For example, I saw several times a Chapayeka jump on the back of a passing bicycle. They also recognized things that especially pertained to the figure portrayed by their mask; for example, a rooster went to a food cart selling corn and stayed there a long time, apparently wanting to get to the corn. The Chapayekas danced to the singing, and at the end of each verse they jumped and shook the rattles. According to a statement recorded by Painter the Chapayekas act as if the alabazas were dance music for them (Painter 1986: 230).

The Chapayekas serve as referential markers at times, for example in the way they organize space during the ritual. They march and stand in lines, which cannot be crossed. The Chapayekas form very concrete borders by forming lines that circle or flank the others figures. At certain phases they separate other figures of the ritual from each other, or form a border around them. For example, they hold the rope that separates the figures that represent the Virgin and Jesus.

The Chapayekas communicate extensively among themselves in sign language. There are a few easily recognizable conventional signs, which are complemented with indexical gestures. For example the hip shake, called *chepchepte* in earlier ethnography, is an important gesture (ibid. 226). It punctuates communication as well as the singing and music of the other performers, is a part of greetings, and also shows agreement. The Chapayekas give greetings by turning their back, making one or several small flat footed hops, and shaking their hip rattles. Another sign they make is to bring up the

hands, crossed at wrists, and then bring them down and to the sides. This is a sign of negation, and is seen for example when the Chapayekas have searched the church and want to tell the Fariseo officials that Jesus is not to be found.

At certain conventionalized moments the Chapayekas communicate with Caballero or Fariseo officers, for example when the Chapayekas arrive and are greeted by a Caballero. They also communicate with the Cabos as needed, and the Cabos must be constantly aware of the Chapayekas as they might need help. The Cabos sometimes herd the Chapayekas in the right direction with their swords. I noticed that often people communicated with the Chapayekas in sign language instead of speaking, although the Chapayekas did react to speech and show their understanding. With each other, the Chapayekas are able to carry on quite lengthy conversations. As most of the signs are indexical, the conversations are tied to the immediate context, comments on what is going on. For example, in 2006 Memín Pinguín and another Chapayeka were discussing the public announcement system, pointing at the loud speaker and gesturing, the other one was telling Memín that he could go and fix it, by pointing at Memín and making encouraging “go on” –gestures. Another time two Chapayekas joined the *konti* late, and when the others acted surprised to see them, giving little jumps of startled shock, and made questioning gestures with their palms out, they mimed taking a picture with a camera and pointed towards another part of the plaza. Someone had been caught taking photos.

The Chapayekas make use of conventional signs known and used in other parts of Mexico as well. For example, when the Chapayekas guard Jesus as a prisoner, people come up and put money onto a collection plate. If the Chapayekas felt there weren't enough donations coming, they would point to the people and then point at their own elbow to signify a miser (as someone who would have patches at the elbows).

### **Interaction between the Chapayekas and spectators**

Those spectators who situated themselves near the Chapayekas or watched them closely, risked the embarrassment of being singled out by the Chapayekas and becoming the point of everyone's attention with very little possibility to defend themselves. The Chapayekas were sometimes menacing, but most often they were mocking. I often saw a Chapayeka direct the attention to some detail of a spectator, such as being overweight (by pointing and making a shape by gesturing with the hands), or an earring or long hair worn by a male. Once Rambo imitated the laid back posture of a teenager by leaning against a pick-up truck next to the boy and imitating his “cool” hand-

signals to passing friends. Sometimes the person being made fun of didn't even notice the Chapayeka's mocking, and this added to the glee of the other spectators.

Sometimes spectators – especially the kids, sometimes men, women almost never – would engage in joking with the Chapayekas, but usually they were treated with much respect. For example, if a Chapayeka took someone's bicycle, the owner would not protest. It seemed the correct thing to do was to accept and bear the attentions of a Chapayeka with good humor despite possible embarrassment. Mostly the respect was seen in the way people would keep out of the way of the Chapayekas. The kids actually played a kind of game of daring with the Chapayekas, trying to get as close as possible without getting caught.

The Chapayekas could also be friendly, like Popeye, who arrived in 2007 handing out candy to children, but this often made people who were chosen for the attention a bit uneasy. The Chapayekas were not considered very trustworthy. The Chapayekas may also punish people breaking the rules, and as a Yaqui woman from Potam said: they may first tempt you to do something, and then turn around and punish you. The punishments used to be harsher; a spectator might have been whipped, for example. This is no longer allowed, although performers may be subject to punishment. However, the Chapayekas are more feared than others; a young couple who were told by a Caballero not to make physical contact in the church, repeated several times they were lucky it wasn't the apache, the leader of the Chapayekas, who caught them standing with their arms around each other. I saw the Chapayekas take away someone's camera a couple of times and once forcefully remove a man from a procession.

Traditionally the Chapayekas were supposed to be ignored by adults, and their clowning was a way to lure people into wrongful behavior which they would then punish. The previous ethnography does note that children especially enjoyed the Chapayekas. (Painter 1986: 208; Spicer 1980: 77, 79). I was told by a Chapayeka performer that these days it's fine to laugh at the Chapayekas clowning outside the church, and that this is a way of supporting them and aiding the ritual, but that in the church one should remain respectful. He also said that the jokes and clowning are part of the performance because the "Chapayekas make fun of everything" and that that is the way the people were at the time of the crucifixion.

Definitely some of the Chapayekas were recognized as especially funny and became favorites of the crowd. They were imitated and talked about a long time after Easter was over. The children, who appeared to enjoy the Chapayekas the most, laughed openly at the clowning. Their faces lit up when



the Chapayekas approached. Many adults also laughed or smiled and watched the Chapayekas closely. Children liked to get closer, but were often discouraged by adults. A small boy who was happily marching along next to a Chapayeka during a procession was scolded by his mother and pulled away. Another woman scolded kids who provoked the apache into making a lunge at them. The church group more or less ignored the Chapayekas during the rituals.

In conversation, adults admitted that the Chapayekas did impress them. One of the Chapayeka performers mentioned with a chuckle how Chucky and the devil were scary figures. The Chapayekas are frightening for their otherness and unpredictability. Many of the children were at times truly frightened that the Chapayekas will actually do some harm to them. When a boy, playing at how close he could get to the Chapayekas, was caught, some young girls really got worried, wanted to go get their mother, and even asked me (despite being obviously an outsider, I was the only adult around at this point) if I thought the Chapayekas would really harm the child. Some children were extremely frightened and screamed in terror if they so much as saw a Chapayeka in the distance. Often parents comforted the children and encouraged them to go watch the Chapayekas from a safe distance. A few, mostly the very small children, were quite confident.

### **The special status of the Chapayeka**

The special position of the Chapayekas is also apparent in stories and normal daily discourse as well as the way they are treated. Many people, especially the children, are afraid of the Chapayekas and all treat them with respect. The Chapayekas may punish people for breaking the rules of conduct during the ritual, but the fear they inspire goes beyond that. The Chapayeka is the only figure in Yaqui ritual that is potentially dangerous both to the performer and to those who come in contact with them. The danger resides mostly in the mask, but other paraphernalia of the Chapayeka are also considered dangerous. There are ghost stories about Chapayekas, and stories of Chapayeka rattles left alone in a room making the characteristic rattling sound at night without anyone there to move them.

Dangers associated with the uninitiated touching the mask and Chapayeka ghost stories are known in the other towns as well. The ghost of a Chapayeka is said to come running out of the church at midnight to the main cross. (Olavarría 2003: 246, Painter 1986: 221). In Córorit, it is said that at Lenten time, a Chapayeka can sometimes be seen and heard at one of the bridges that cross the canal. In 2007 a teenager playing Chapayeka after Easter

was over fell into the canal. He was unharmed, but some people said that the reason he fell in was that he was playing with things that were better left alone. In Sonora, replicas of Chapayeka masks may be displayed in museums. These replicas have never been used, and are usually of a slightly smaller size than the real masks. I once made a joke about putting on one of these replicas and wearing it. This visibly shocked the person (who had performed as a Chapayeka) I was talking to. He made it clear that this was not a good idea. The fear felt towards the Chapayekas is put to use by mothers. I several times heard mothers use the threat "if you don't behave, I will give you to the Chapayekas." Or "the Chapayekas will come and get you." One mother even said she would take her son to the Chapayekas and they would eat him.

After Easter was over, it seemed as if all the boy children in Córorit were playing Chapayeka. I also saw young boys who performed as Cabos play Chapayeka, marching and gesturing with their weapons like the Chapayekas while the adults were resting. This seems to be a tradition of its own: a picture from Pascua taken in the late 1930s and another from Loma de Guamuchil in the 1990s show children playing Chapayeka, (Moctezuma Zamarrón 2007: front cover, 53; Spicer 1940: plate xiii). The kids had masks, mostly made of cardboard, some very elaborate. The figures I saw were mostly the traditional orejonas, as well as roosters and a few others. They also had weapons, and rattle belts made with bottle-tops. Sometimes the kids wore cardboard gaiters around their ankles and capes. Sometimes the kids took care to do everything right, getting down to put on the mask or take it off, sometimes they seemed to get tired and just pulled the mask off. They did not, however, speak with the mask on.

I never saw girls playing Chapayeka. I did see little boys as young as two years old, happily marching and beating together two sticks. A little boy of about three years old already knew to pick up two sticks, beat them together and march. He also tried to imitate the hip-shake, but that was a little more difficult. A little girl of the same age didn't seem to have any inclination to play Chapayeka, although she normally played with the boy and imitated him in everything else. When I asked about girls playing Chapayeka, the mothers said no, they'd never seen it, and hadn't particularly wanted to do it as children. The reactions didn't seem to indicate it would be a very bad or forbidden thing, it just wasn't done. The boys, on the other hand, are encouraged. They are applauded when they pick up the sticks, and a parent or someone else was usually willing to them a mask or a rattle belt.

## Chapter 4

### Easter in Cócórit

In this chapter I will give a description of the Easter ritual in Cócórit in 2007. To show how convention and invention meet in performance in a specific time and place, I have chosen to present a description of a specific performance and then discuss the conventional and inventional aspects of the ritual in the following chapters. The celebrations of the Yaqui Easter ritual in Arizona have been described in detail by Painter (1986). While Painter offers a generalized account of what are considered to be the correct forms of ritual, my aim is to give a positioned description of what I witnessed. These accounts are both related and contrasting. Although her description is firmly based in ethnography and also discusses some exceptions and changes over time, Painter aims to give a description of the ritual as it is in its ideal repeatable form. In respect to this description much of what I saw in Cócórit did indeed seem very familiar and it is clear that there is a repeatable and very stable form to the Yaqui Easter that is shared across different Yaqui communities. My description aims to add to and go beyond describing the conventional form by giving a situated description, with an emphasis on the Chapayekas' actions, including improvised parts that might never be repeated again. Of course, the conventional form is always contingent on performance, repetition by the means of a certain kind of symbolization.

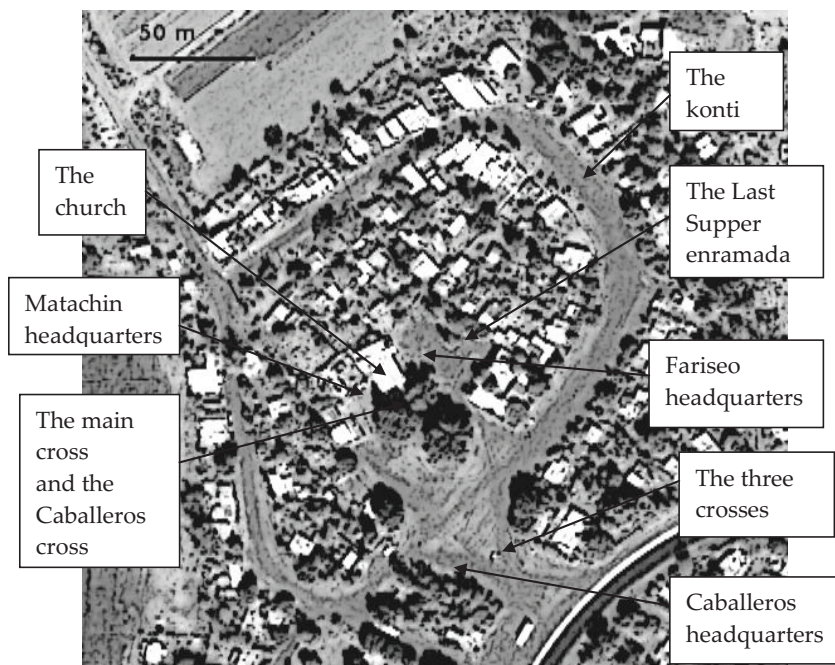
I will first present my data as a description of the entire ritual and then my analysis of the dynamics of the Yaqui Easter ritual, first of the conventional side of the ritual and then the invention of the Chapayeka performance. It is necessary to present a full account of the ritual to which the analysis refers, as the moments that are lifted out for analysis nevertheless occur in very specific moments in the ritual and are meaningful in relation to the totality. I also want to bring out the entire process of performance, including the preparations and the way any unexpected events were handled.

#### The places

The Conty church is the central point of the Easter ritual in Cócórit. Equally important are the plaza in front and the konti that surrounds the church.

Figure 4 shows the church, the konti, the headquarters of the different ceremonial groups that are set up for the ritual, the church plaza, "the main cross" in front of the church, and "the three crosses" that mark the beginning

and end of the processions around the konti as well as a kind of gateway into the community. There are many different things happening in different places at the same time. During the years I was present, I tried to position myself in different places, so as to get different views of what happens for example outside and inside the church at the Saturday of Gloria.



*Figure 4. Ritual locations around the church*

On a normal day, the plaza is very much just a place of passing through. Several streets meet at the plaza, and it is also the terminal stop for buses. On ritual days it becomes a center of ritual action and other activities must work around that. Each day followed a similar pattern: first, there were activities of preparation, and slowly both performers and spectators gathered. I have been told that in Córorit there are more spectators than at the other pueblos, where the spectators are more likely to be integrated into the ritual, asked to carry the

figures, for example. In Córorit people are allowed to come and watch, but the spectators must abide by the rules. The spectators I saw were mostly locals, but there were also outsiders. I was told in 2007 that the ritual had been mentioned on both radio and TV, and groups of tourists or students were fairly frequent.

A notable part of Easter in Córorit is the "*feria*." In 2004 and 2006 there were amusement park rides, as well as a bingo type *lotería* game, an inflated castle and trampolines for children, and many food stands set on the fringes of the church plaza. In 2007 there were no rides, but the castle, food stands, and *lotería* were present. People passed easily back and forth between the *feria* and the ritual. A young woman told me: "I go and eat me a mango, and then I join the Holy Virgin on Her round." Others play the *lotería*, ride the bumper cars and then join the processions. The families are present dressed up in their Sunday best. Small children stay with their parents or with older siblings, couples often stay together, but otherwise the groups change, and different people observe different things. Children usually follow the Chapayekas, while an elderly lady may remain seated inside the church when the performers leave, and wait for them to return. Most adults focus on the groups that go with Jesus and the Virgin. Spectators would at times go with one or the other, according to personal preference, the plans of family or friends, time of arrival etc., but the Fariseos were only followed by the children and the anthropologist. The church was usually left almost empty after the first two groups had gone. The children enjoy the Chapayekas and this is quite acceptable to the parents, who do not discourage the children from it, and some times fathers (I didn't see mothers do this) would take small children to see the Chapayekas. At the same time, for the adults, an appropriate way of participating is to follow the procession with one of the deities. Nobody really expressed any surprise at my paying attention to the Chapayekas, but I was considered quite strange anyway. Of course, a local resident would grow up seeing the rituals every year and go through all the different ways of participating in the ritual, whether as a performer or a spectator.

## Chapter 4.1

### Lenten Rituals before Holy Week

#### Ash Wednesday

The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday. According to Painter, there are no special rites on Ash Wednesday in Arizona, possibly only a meeting (Painter 1985: 359). In Cócorit, however, it is the day when the rituals begin and the first Chapayeka makes his appearance. In 2007 some people arrived the night before and set up camp at the Caballero headquarters by the fence. I was told they were from Vicam, another Yaqui town. In 2007 one of the three crosses had been knocked crooked. It was like this when I arrived in January, and I was told it had been like this for a while, that “kids” had knocked it down. It wasn’t fixed until Ash Wednesday, when the preparations began. The church was opened, the saints were uncovered, and put in their correct places on the main and side altars. All the crosses were painted white.

The Caballeros’ flag and swords were placed at the three crosses, to mark their headquarters, and the flag of the Fariseos was put at their headquarters by the church, as all the years I was present. The church group held the church as their headquarters. I follow Painter and Spicer in calling these headquarters, they are places where the groups gather to prepare for rituals, but also to rest and eat. Until Holy week, the headquarters were set up for each day of rituals, and the participants arrived throughout the day. The Fariseo drum was sounded periodically; this is the traditional way to call the people to ritual. I also heard it at the neighboring town, Loma de Guamuchil. When people first arrived, they entered the church and greeted the saints by genuflecting and crossing themselves in front of the altars. Then they went to their respective headquarters and greeted those already present with a handshake.

Some spectators arrived with ash crosses already on their foreheads, having presumably gone first to the church in the town center. Many people in Cócorit were very open about participating in rites given by both churches, for example some young people showed up at the konti church with printed t-shirts of the town church Easter procession.

The rites began in the early afternoon, when many people were already waiting. First the Fariseos and then the Caballeros marched into the church and formed lines inside the church. The church group was already in the church, close to the altar. The women wore *rebozo* shawls, white skirts (many embroidered with colorful flowers), and blouses. Most wore ordinary shoes,

not sandals. According to Erickson (2008: 75, 77) this traditional clothing is worn by some women daily, but in Cócorit I only saw it during the rituals.

The Rezante was bare headed, and wore a shirt, pants, and Yaqui sandals. I noted that most men in Cócorit wore a hat outside, a cowboy hat, or a baseball cap. During the rituals, the Rezantes were always bare headed, while the other male performers wore hats, which were only taken off at precise moments. Not all were in complete ritual wear yet. Some of the Caballeros wore boots, others sandals. Many wore white hats, shirts and pants, but some were in jeans. The Fariseos showed a lot of variation, some were wearing white hats, others baseball-caps. Some, such as the first Chapayeka, were already wearing the white shirt and pants and Yaqui sandals more common for all at later stages of the ritual, the rest of their ritual possessions carried on the shoulder in a roll. One young man, who performed as a Cabo, was on this first day dressed in very loose jeans, a loud print shirt, baseball-cap and regular shoes.

Once the Caballeros and Fariseos were in place, the Cantoras and Rezante began to sing. Periodically the flutist blew three notes and the drummer struck the drum once. The singing went on for about an hour, and then everyone went up to the altar in turns and received an ashen cross on the forehead. The performers went first. All left their hats when they went up to the altar. The rest of the time the Caballeros and Fariseos wore their hats in church. The first to receive the cross was the first Chapayeka. The Chapayeka had a redlined scarf with a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe. He went up to the altar alone and kneeled in front of the table at the altar. After receiving his cross, the Chapayeka got under a bigger table also set in front of the altar, covered by a white cloth. Another Fariseo, in white and with a scarf partly hiding his face, stayed next to the table.

The rest of the members of ceremonial societies went two at a time, kneeling to receive their cross. First the Caballeros, then the Fariseos, some of the Cantoras went with the Caballeros, others after the Fariseos. The singing was carried on throughout. Finally the rest of the people who had no specific role in the ritual went to the altar, without kneeling, pushing and shoving to get to the front. The head Rezante and an older Cantora were putting crosses on the foreheads of the people. Some also took ashes home, to use in blessing the house. The people then returned to their places, some left the church after receiving their crosses. The singing continued, with flute and drum. The children were pushing to get closer to the table under which the Chapayeka was still hidden. The Fariseos straightened their lines and kept the spectators at a distance.



### **The first Chapayeka**

When a bell was rung, the Rezante lifted the cloth covering the table and the first Chapayeka emerged, in full Chapayeka costume, with a traditional orejona type mask, serape-blanket and hip- and ankle rattles on. At first the Chapayeka was weak, like the newborn creature he was. He lay on the ground on his side, unable to get up. He moved on the ground, turning slowly in a circle, trying to get up. His legs didn't hold. He supported himself on his knife and elbow, trying to push himself up.

After several minutes of struggling, he was able to get on his feet. At first the Chapayeka was very shaky and uncertain, pressing his knife against his legs as if to see if they would work. He tried hesitantly the most common Chapayekas movements and actions: he scraped the knife and sword together, and tried a tentative shake of the hips. When he heard the drum being struck, he shook himself harder and seemed to perk up. He communicated with the Fariseos in sign language. This he did by pointing to himself and them and making gestures with the knife. Then he did the triple flat footed jump with both feet and shake to the Fariseos, and then to the altar. This is done as a greeting before engaging in action.

Then, apparently having agreed to join them, the Chapayeka took his place between the two Fariseo lines, taking dance steps in place and beating a rhythm while the Cantoras and Rezante sang. At times he lifted the knife up to his ear to listen, sometimes he would lift it horizontally slightly above his eyes about 50 cm in front of his face and look. If there was a pause between songs, he would listen. He danced in the typical Chapayeka rhythm, taking march steps in place. At this point children had filled the space between the Fariseos and the altar, pushing to get as close as possible to the Chapayeka. Most of the children were smiling and excited, although some were scared. A little girl of about seven years old cried and screamed when brought into the church by her parents and refused to stay.

The Chapayeka paid no attention to the children or other spectators. He listened to the church group and communicated by signs with the other Fariseos. After the singing ended, a Fariseo spoke. He, two Caballeros, and two other Fariseos were turned towards the Cantoras and Rezantes. He spoke in Yaqui, for a long time. He spoke quietly, his eyes to the ground, without looking up. Periodically the Chapayeka would do a shake, the Fariseo flag was waved and the flute and drum were sounded. After the speaking was done, all returned to their places in line and then the Fariseos marched back to the respective headquarters. The marching was done according to a specific pattern, which was repeated every time. This became more spectacular over



the weeks as the number of performers grew. The two Fariseo lines marched forward in the church. They turned in front of the altar and passed each other on the right. They circled the main cross, the lines passing each other again on the right, then to the headquarters, where they passed the cross, lined up and put away the flag and swords. One young man took off immediately after returning to the headquarters while others remained at their respective headquarters for several hours more.

### **1st Friday**

On the first of the six Fridays of Lent the konti was walked for the first time. The flags were placed early in the morning or during the night before at the three crosses and the Fariseo headquarters. They were in place when I went to look at about 7 a.m. The Fariseo drum was sounded since noon. Again, the performers arrived gradually, placing their swords at the crosses. Today all the Fariseos wore sandals (most Yaqui sandals) and long-sleeved collared button down shirts and white hats. Almost all wore a scarf in front of their faces. A cross was placed where the Caballeros headquarters would be later, close to the cross in front of the church. Children were talking excitedly to each other of the coming events and how they wouldn't be afraid of the Chapayekas.

At about 2.15 p.m. a group of Fariseos went to put the konti crosses in place. There are 14 stations; the three crosses mark the first one. The 11<sup>th</sup> station is calvary, also marked by three crosses. The group putting up the crosses for the stations went counter-clockwise, as most of the processions do. Today there were also about four snack vendors. Slowly people began to gather in the afternoon.

The rites began when the Cantoras and the Rezantes started to sing in the church, kneeling in front of the big crucifix, which had now been placed against the altar. After some time, the Caballeros lined up at their new cross. The group with Jesus was the first to set off from the church. First were three boys with green leaves on their head, carrying three tall poles, the one in the middle in the form of a cross. Then the Viejito, the man who would represent Jesus at certain points of the ritual, carrying a large simple wooden cross, called the way cross by Painter. She says there is no vow for carrying it in Pascua, but I always saw it carried by the Viejito. (Painter 1986: 151). Then a mat filled with flowers carried by two boys, then the big crucifix, carried horizontally at first. They were followed by Cantoras flanked by a Caballero and one of the Fariseo officers with their swords. Spectators followed, blending into the group of performers. At each station, the flower mat was placed on the ground in front and the crucifix was stood up in the flowers. The Rezante and

some of the Cantoras kneeled in front, facing the crucifix. The three boys and Jesus stood to the side behind the station, facing the Cantoras and Rezantes. After the three crosses the crucifix was carried upright. The Rezantes and Cantoras sang while they walked, and prayed at the stations.

At this time, the Fariseos were still waiting at their headquarters, relaxed, hanging out. The first Chapayeka was half lying down, hat on, wearing everything but his mask. Next the group that would go with the Virgin prepared. First was the biggest Virgin figure, in a blue gown, carried by four women in flower crowns, then a small one in white. Next came a Rezante (younger than the other) and Cantoras, fewer than with Jesus. They left after the Jesus group had left the second station and waited at each station for the first group to go on.

Finally the Fariseos prepared and marched into the church in two lines. The Chapayeka was in front, between the lines. The lines circled the main cross once and marched into the church. In the church the Chapayeka searched. He looked with the knife in front of his eyes, and poked his sword at the cloth covering the table. Another man, dressed as a Fariseo but without a Chapayeka mask, searched with the Chapayeka. This man and the Chapayeka faced each other, knocked their swords together rapidly and then wiped the knife and swords against each other. Three times the Chapayeka went to a Fariseo to show that there is nothing to be found. He did this by pointing towards the altar with his knife, then putting his hands close to each other at chest height and then bringing them quickly apart. Each time the Fariseo spoke in Yaqui to the Chapayeka, who then searched again. The other man marked off the Chapayeka movements, but without much enthusiasm. Once this had been repeated three times, the Fariseos set off on the konti, the Chapayeka marching energetically in front. The Chapayeka circled the three crosses counterclockwise. He searched at the main cross and all the stations, bending to look at the ground. He did not make a full circle around all the crosses, at some he only passed them and then turned around to his left, to look at the station, and then trotted on to the next station. He moved at the characteristic Chapayeka trot, flexing his knees and bending forwards from the waist. Suddenly he stopped; the Fariseos had caught up with the Virgin. The Fariseos stayed, waiting, at the station. The Chapayeka kept on searching, as if he could not see the Virgin. When she advanced, so did the Chapayekas.

When they had gone about three quarters of the way around the konti, the Fariseos took a shortcut to the church. At this point, the group with Jesus had reached the first station again. The Fariseos marched into the church, formed two lines, took off their serapes and placed them on the church floor, so

that the floor between the two lines was covered. Most took off their hats, the Chapayeka took off his mask, some of the Fariseos at the door still had hats on. The Fariseos were down on one knee, heads down. The first ones of the Jesus group, those carrying the symbols of Jesus, walked over the blankets. The Rezante and Cantoras stopped at the door and waited for the Fariseos to gather the blankets. This has not been described in previous ethnography. I was told it was for blessing the blankets. There are points in Yaqui ritual where the performers pray or purify themselves, such as the apology given by the Pascolas. The blessing of the blankets could be an indication of Jesus still holding power and the Fariseos needing his blessing for the things to come. It is also similar to how walking or dancing over ground makes it sacred.

The Rezantes and Cantoras began to sing in the church, the Fariseos were lined up. The Viejito sat on a chair with the way cross in front of the altar. Meanwhile, another Chapayeka appeared. He came, wearing his mask, from the direction of the bridge, where all but the first Chapayeka would make their first entrance. He was accompanied by a Cabo carrying the Chapayeka's hat. The Chapayeka went to the three crosses and greeted the station in the customary way, by turning his back and shaking his hips. Then the main cross, then the second station, from there he went to the headquarters. This was the route taken by all the new Chapayekas. The Chapayeka moved at a jog. It seemed like he wanted to go from the headquarters to the church, but after a sign from a Fariseo at the church door, he returned to the headquarters, took off his mask and joined the men waiting around.

The second Chapayeka had a mask that I thought resembled a rat, but I was told is human, of the rey-type. The nose was long and sharp, with a red tip. The face was a dark grey, almost black. He wore a hat in the shape of a bird, a head in front, wings and a tail in back. The hat was blue and white. The ears were round. His blanket was red-green checked.

The singing continued for approximately an hour and a half. Finally all the Fariseos marched to the headquarters, where they talked in a circle. The singing ended. The Fariseos moved in a group to the Caballeros' headquarters, where both groups formed a circle and talked. It seems that the Fariseos always go to the Caballeros' headquarters to talk. The church group talked in their own circle at the door of the church. Gradually the spectators left, some stopping to buy more food at the stands. There were 22 Fariseos today. All the groups were gradually growing in number.

## 2nd Friday

People had again been at the church since the night before, drinking coffee and eating, taking naps and resting at the Caballeros headquarters. Slowly more people began to gather. Four Fariseos arrived, at the main cross they raised their hats and crossed themselves. They entered the church and greeted the saints. At this point, as they were not performing, they took off their hats in church and replaced it when they left. One of the four wore his scarf on his face, the others around their necks. The children, as always, were excited, saying to each other how the Chapayekas would arrive soon. Gradually the food vendors arrived. In the church there were candles burning in front of the saints. When the rites began, the Cantoras, one Caballero and one Fariseo entered the church. The same Fariseo stayed with the Cantoras during the procession. As before, the group with Jesus began the konti first. At the station the people were placed as before. When the first group had reached the third station, the group with the Virgin started. First the flag girl, then the big Virgin figure in a blue gown, carried by four women in flower headdresses. Another woman, a rebozo over her head, helped them. There were seven Cantoras and one Rezante, younger than the head Rezante who went with Jesus. Today there were three figures of the Virgin, the two smaller ones representing Veronica and Mary in white lace gowns, carried by girls.

Today there were 25 Fariseos in total. Now there were two masked Chapayekas from the beginning. The same Fariseo as before “talked” with them in the church, where the Chapayekas searched and came to report three times. During the final time, the Chapayeka and the captain knocked their knives together once, decisively. Then the group set off on the konti, the Chapayekas in front, searching. As the Fariseos marched, the Chapayekas were at the front of each line. The first Chapayeka was on the right, the other on the left. The whole time they were searching. The Fariseos circled around both the the main cross and another cross the Caballeros had set up close to it. At this point there was little clowning to the Chapayekas. They behaved in the traditional Chapayeka manner in their movement and reactions, but there was no improvisation. They searched in a Chapayeka manner, holding their knife in front of their eyes to focus, poking at things with their swords. They did not engage with the onlookers. Sometimes the Chapayekas spooked at something; they touched a hat left at the altar with the tip of their sword and then shied away from it. When the Fariseo officer spoke to them, the Chapayekas held the knife to their ear to listen.

Once they caught up with the Virgin, this time even earlier, the Fariseo group stopped. After this the two Chapayekas were about one station ahead of

the rest of the group. They were accompanied by four Cabos. The other Fariseos stayed in line further down. Later a Fariseo moved ahead and from his sign the group again took the short cut to the church. During the konti the Chapayekas searched constantly. They bent forwards and searched the ground with the point of their swords. At the stations they often got down on the ground and looked at or listened to the very base of the cross. They knocked their knife and sword together to each other and pointed at things and pointed things out. If they found something on the road, they picked it up or turned it over with the sword. When one of the two Chapayekas found a leaf on the ground, he turned it over, the other took notice and they examined it together. It seemed to me they agreed it was a trace of Jesus. They spent a long time examining it and seemed to agree that it was important. They nodded, using the whole body, and knocked their knife and sword excitedly together. At times they scraped the sword off and spooked. They gestured 'onward!' to each other.

This time it took a while for Jesus to reach the church. The Fariseos again put down their blankets, the Chapayekas without their masks. The Virgin group was following more closely behind Jesus now. The Virgin Mary, searching for her son in the Yaqui monte, the wilderness, is catching up with him (Painter 1986: 367). One Caballero came with his sword into the church with the Jesus group. The rest returned their swords to the three crosses and returned to headquarters. After singing in the church the groups returned to their respective headquarters and where they stayed, talking.

### **3rd Friday**

Today the number of Chapayekas exploded. At the end of the day there were a total of 15. There were many more of all the groups. The Angelitos came today as well. Again, people gathered early to eat, drink coffee and rest. Slowly the number of people and swords stuck into the ground next to the flags at the headquarters grew. In the church an elderly Cantora and a boy were putting the seats and saints in order. Today there were many new Chapayekas, who arrived in the usual manner at the three crosses, which they greeted. Then they were met by a Caballero, who spoke to them in a low voice. He asked them where they come from, and if they want to work and join the Fariseos (Spicer 1980: 77). After the three crosses the Chapayeka would go to the main cross, and greet it by turning his back to it and doing the customary flat footed jump and shake. Some did this three times, others only once. Some jumped once and then shook for a longer time. From the main cross the Chapayekas went to the first station, which they also greeted. From there they

headed towards the Fariseo headquarters. On the way new Chapayekas were often met by other, masked, Chapayekas who then accompanied them to the headquarters. At the headquarters they took off their mask and greeted the other Fariseos, first the officers, then the rest by shaking hands. Most came with a Cabo, although some came alone. Sometimes the Chapayekas came in small groups. If there were less Cabos than Chapayekas in an arriving group, the Cabos carried the Chapayeka performers' hats piled up on their head. The Chapayekas arriving alone tied the hat to the bundle they carried on their back. Some came first to the headquarters, but all but the first Chapayeka made their first masked entrance from outside the ritual area. I had seen some of them before at the headquarters without the masks on. From there they left and put on the mask somewhere before entering the church plaza. They took the same route, from three crosses to the main cross to the first station but were not greeted by other Chapayekas on their way to the headquarters.

Today arrived the "apache," the leader of the Chapayekas. The day was great fun for the children, who were eagerly waiting for new Chapayekas to arrive. When they caught a glimpse of one heading for the "gate" there were shouts of "here it comes!" The ones who had a name or were recognized as a type were called by name. "*Rambo!*" shouted the children at an apache Chapayeka with a dark brown face, long messy black hair, and with a red bandana tied around his forehead Rambo-style. The individual performance styles of some of the Chapayekas could be seen from the moment of their arrival. Rambo ran like crazy to the main cross, scattering children in his wake. The orejona who arrived with him followed more slowly. At the headquarters, the Fariseos lined up in a half-circle to greet the newcomers, now without masks. Even though they had already been at the headquarters, this was the time to greet them ritually. During the greeting, the Chapayekas carried their masks on their swords, and the other Fariseos held their swords as well. At this time the masks, when not in use, were kept by the wall of the church. More Chapayekas kept arriving. At the same time, an Angelito came to the church with her padrinos, a man and a woman.

After singing and prayers in church, the first two groups set off as before. New Chapayekas kept arriving, regardless of Jesus group they went through their routine, without paying attention to Jesus. The sheriff came, as did "the president of the United States" and a little later the ape and the horse. "*El caballito!*" (horsie!) shouted the children. Other new Chapayekas were the first clown, the dog, and several orejonas. There were also more food vendors and more spectators today.

The Fariseos didn't start off until the Virgin group had disappeared from sight. When the Fariseos started moving at their headquarters, the church filled with children. The Fariseos marched into the church and went through the searching, knocking and communicating three times as before. The first two Chapayekas, who had special duties throughout the ritual, talked to the captain. Now the church seemed filled with Chapayekas and the noise of their knocking was much stronger. Sound created the distinct ambience of the ritual, the singing, the flute and drum, and the rhythms knocked out by the Chapayekas. The Fariseos set off on the konti, the Chapayekas searching at each station. The other Fariseos walked slightly in front in two lines. The Chapayekas followed in loose lines between the last Cabos, the first two Chapayekas leading. Some jogged, others walked. The apache made gestures indicating "all" with large inclusive sweeps of his arms. The sheriff gestured "onward," with his guns. Now there were more people following the Fariseos too, but the majority were still children, and the other groups had grown bigger, too. Sometimes, when they were nearing the Virgin group, the two first Chapayekas got down on the ground as before and investigated the base of the cross. The clown kept close to them. The Chapayekas were very decisive.

The Fariseo group had started off at a brisk pace, but stopped when it caught up with the Virgin. The new Chapayekas were more inclined to clown, improvise, and engage others in interaction than the first two. The clown did the "clown dance" holding his arms out straight in front of him, the tip of the sword on the ground, legs straight, bending forward at the waist and leaning on the sword, dancing by shuffling his feet for a bit, then doing a higher kick out front. When the children who were at the end of the group with the Virgin turned back to look at the Chapayekas, the clown took very slow, long, menacing steps towards them, his knees sinking to almost touch the ground, and then suddenly ran towards them in small quick steps. The children, mesmerized by the slow movement, were frightened by the sudden charge. The clown then turned around and gave his attention to the other Chapayekas. The two first Chapayekas were still on the ground.

At the sound of the drum and flute the Fariseos set off. This time they did not take a short cut to the church, but passed the group of the Virgin on each side. The group with Jesus was now at the three crosses. The Fariseos passed them on the left. At the church, as before, they took off their masks and lay the blankets on the floor. Also the ankle rattlers and hats were taken off, the heads and faces were covered with scarves. Now the lines of Chapayekas reached past the doors outside of the church. The other groups came in singing. The singing continued in the church, as the Fariseos marched back to

headquarters. Slowly people began to leave, but others stayed at the church and headquarters. 40 minutes later there was a fire going, the church was still lit and the door was open. The food stands were still in place, people were milling around.

#### **4th Friday**

##### *A funeral during Lent*

In 2007, during a fiesta, an elderly Fariseo captain had fallen into the canal and drowned. As the deceased was a Fariseo and the death occurred in the Lenten season, the funeral process happened in accordance. While a diver from the fire department searched the canal, all the Fariseos followed the search, the Chapayekas dressed in full ritual gear except for masks and weapons. They stood quietly watching, not in any formation. After the body was found, on the fourth Friday of Lent there was a funeral in the morning. All the ceremonial groups, including the Chapayekas, wearing their masks, participated in the ritual. In the church in front of the altar there was a bier of cane, where the body was laid, on a table covered in a black cloth with a white cross. A light blue and silver coffin was outside, next to the three crosses. The Cantoras and Rezantes were singing in the church, the Fariseos and the Caballeros lined up as during the Easter rituals. Periodically a bell was sounded and a rocket was sent off outside the church. A man threw a rocket from the Fariseo headquarters, so that it exploded around the main cross. I was told that the rockets were "*por la Gloria*," for the glory. Rockets are an important part of Yaqui ritual. They are also set off during the fiestas at the households and are an important part of the deer dance. They are said to be communication to the deities, a sign that the ritual is starting, a message to the gods (Painter 1986: 74).

The atmosphere of the funeral did not seem tense or sad, but the Chapayekas didn't clown, didn't do anything extra. They marched, in the same step and rhythm as in the Saturday Gloria. This was also noticed and remarked on by a spectator. Sometimes the Chapayekas turned away from the church and scraped off their swords. When a rocket exploded, they turned towards it. Periodically they would shake their hip rattles. Then the Chapayekas took off their masks for a moment, but kept their place in line. When the body was brought out, they put their masks back on and marched in line. There were 21 Chapayekas now. The body was dressed in dark pants, black socks and Yaqui sandals, and a light colored shirt, the arms folded on the chest, and covered in flowers. The body was carried by Caballeros. Women carried out flower arrangements from the church to the three crosses. At the main cross the body



was lifted up and down three times. This was repeated at the Caballeros cross. From there he was taken to the three crosses and put down, the head towards the crosses. Two Cabos and a Caballero stood in front of him, facing the church, the Caballero on the right. The Caballero and the boy on the left were holding crosses wrapped in colourful ribbons. The Cabo boy in the middle was holding a figure of Jesus, also wrapped in ribbons. Four Rezantes were kneeling facing the body, four or five Cantoras behind them. The Chapayekas marched to form a circle around the three crosses and everyone. There was more singing and praying. There were some people standing around watching, but much less than in the Easter rites.

After prayers at the three crosses the body was wrapped in a white cloth and lifted onto a pick-up to be taken to the cemetery. The flowers and the Cantoras were also taken in cars, the pall bearers and the flowers in the same car as the body. Another pick up truck took the coffin. More people left for the cemetery in cars, some walking. The Chapayekas set off wearing masks, but after a short distance some took it off and walked with a scarf covering the face. I was told that at the cemetery there would be more singing, praying, and that the Chapayekas would march.

#### *The konti*

About three and a half hours later the Chapayekas began to return. They came wearing the mask to the three crosses and greeted it with the customary hop and shake, their back turned to the crosses. From there they went over to the fence next to the Caballero headquarters and took off their masks. There were masks on the swords next to the fence and at the crosses. There were Chapayekas resting in the shade also in front of the houses next to the plaza. Both the flags of the Fariseos and the Caballeros were at the three crosses now.

As the afternoon wore on, the people and snack vendors began to gather as before. The Cantoras entered the church, the church group prepared and the group with Jesus went on as usual, the group with the Virgin following one station behind. When the Virgin was at the three crosses, a new Chapayeka arrived: a clown. Once the Virgin had moved on to the first station, the clown came to the three crosses and had the usual conversation with a Caballero. They stayed here longer than usual, presumably to let the Virgin pass. The children called "*payaso, payaso!*" (clown!) When the Chapayeka, provoked by the calling, made a run at them, they scattered. Once the Chapayeka moved on to the main cross, he did so at a run, scattering the

children again. From there he went through the normal route and still had time to take off his mask at the Fariseo headquarters.

Finally the Fariseos prepared and marched into the church. They searched three times, as before, now they also marched rhythmically. After forming two lines and knocking their swords together, they marched in a circle so that the first two Chapayekas were positioned to talk to the captain. The Chapayekas were more intense in their gesturing now. Then the Fariseos set off on the konti at a quick pace until they reached the Virgin, when they again stood still. The Chapayekas often teased each other while standing still. The yellow haired clown poked at the new clown with his sword, but when he turned to look, the yellow haired clown would move so he couldn't be seen, hiding behind the new clown's back. The Mexican was very interested in the horse, caressing his mane with his knife, patting him, and training him by tapping one of his legs with his sword until the horse would lift that leg. Then the apache intervened with this by tapping on the one leg that the horse still had on the ground, thus spoiling the training session.

Today the Chapayekas caught up with the Virgin. The Fariseos were searching for Jesus, and they found first his mother who was following her son, also searching for him. First the first two Chapayekas ran in opposing directions three times around the group of the Virgin. Then all the Chapayekas, in two lines, marched around the group three times, knocking their sword and knife together. The Cabos stood at the sides in two lines. When the apache was passing, the children made "an Indian war-whoop" sound at him, and suddenly the apache made a small lunge at them. The children spooked, shoving at the adults, and were scolded by a woman, who warned them to leave the Chapayekas alone. When the Virgin group moved on, the Fariseos followed, flanking the group on both sides. This time the Fariseos returned to the church together with the Virgin, and did not put their blankets down on the floor, but formed two lines at the sides. During the singing and prayers they danced and kept rhythm, the Chapayekas shaking their hips periodically. The church group was still singing when the Fariseos marched back to the headquarters.

After the singing, the same people as before spoke in the church. Then everybody started to go home. The Fariseo masks and swords were taken to the small room in the church. The Chapayekas took their rattles, scarves, blankets and other things off, in the opposite order of putting them on, at the headquarters cross and rolled them up in bundles. Before leaving, they entered the church to honor the saints by touching them in order and making the sign of the cross. There were 26 Chapayekas today.

### 5th Friday

A new clown Chapayeka arrived with a small case. Rambo and the blue-faced clown came to meet him. The clown that had arrived previously menaced the new one, who backed away in fear. He opened his case, which turned out to be a shoe shining kit. The blue faced clown put his foot on the handle and allowed his "shoe" to be shined. With his second foot, he put it on the handle but every time the clown reached out with a brush, he quickly pulled his foot away. After doing this a few times, he let the other foot be shined as well. Then the blue faced clown made signs at Rambo to have his shoes shined, too. He shook his hips, but so as to make no noise. A woman watching them said that meant that he has the money and can afford it. When Rambo finally approached the shoe shining clown and lifted his foot onto the kit handle, the new clown waved his hand in front of his face, got up and backed away holding his nose. Finally all the Chapayekas went back to headquarters together.

Today was *Viernes de Lazaro*, which meant that Pilate would be joining the Fariseos. New Chapayekas arrived before the rituals, six together in a group: five orejonas and the devil. This meant that all together a total of 38 Chapayekas had arrived. The devil was very stationary, he moved much less than the others. While the five others searched at the first station, the devil stood to one side, very still. When the others danced, he did not, and he shook his hips very little. Many people, including a Chapayeka performer, said the devil never entered the church, but I did see him do it. As Pilate joined in today, there was a horse for him, decorated with colourful ribbons. The first Chapayeka and a blue-faced orejona were taken to fetch the horse from the Caballero headquarters to the Fariseo headquarters. The Chapayeka leading the horse did so incompetently, as if not knowing what to do when the horse wanted to stop to eat. The Chapayeka turned toward the horse and danced helplessly in place, keeping the lead rope slack.

Today when an Angelito came to the church with two madrinas she was attacked by the Chapayekas. The Angelitos greeted the three crosses when they arrived, and in the space between this and the main cross, they were vulnerable to the attack of the Chapayekas. When Rambo and the first clown saw her, they put on their masks and rushed to attack the Angelito. They rushed up to the child and reached out for her. The child was scared, but her madrina knew what to do, shouting "*Ave María Purísima!*" (Hail Mary most pure) at the Chapayekas, who recoiled at the words as if struck. At the main cross the Chapayekas let the Angelito go in peace. When another Angelito arrived, this was repeated by the same Chapayekas. This time the padrino of

the Angelito beat the Chapayekas with his palmbranch. The spectators roared with laughter, the padrino was smiling. While it is a serious matter to protect the Angelito and beat the Chapayekas off, at the same time the humor of the situation was evident to all. After seeing this some children asked their mother why the Chapayekas attack the Angelitos and asked if they are evil, "malo." The mother answered, "To the Angelitos they are."

Pilate was taken to the Fariseo headquarters. New Chapayekas kept arriving, including another clown. The lance of Pilate was now at the Fariseo flag. Today the Fariseos wore black hats, scarves and capes. The Fariseos marched and lined up at the church. Pilate was walked out of the church held by two Chapayekas. They marched him out quickly and unceremoniously between them. The horse had been brought out to the main cross by a Cabo. Today all the groups moved in close formation but kept separate. The group with Jesus came out of the church, followed by the group with the Virgin. After this, the two lines of Fariseos marched into the church, the lines passing each other, then directly out of the church to flank the other groups. Pilate led the way, he passed each station and then turned to wait. Two Chapayekas stood as his guards. The group with Jesus prayed at each station as before. Two Chapayekas held a black rope that separated the Virgin from Jesus. The Chapayeka guards were taken out of line by Cabos and taken to their post. When it was time to change guards (more or less at each station) the Cabos called the next Chapayeka out of line and took him to the post where the previous Chapayeka explained the duties to the newcomer and then was returned to his place in line by Cabos. Another Cabo stayed with the Chapayeka. The Chapayekas passed the rope facing away from each other, back to back, from left hand to left hand. The mimed instruction was given in an individual manner, pointing with the knife at the new Chapayeka, at the rope, at the groups.

For example, the Texan, when the other Chapayeka made a gesture to grab the rope, made a "hold it, calm down," gesture with a turned-out palm. Then he pointed with the knife at the group with the Virgin, brought the knife point to the rope and lifted it over, as if miming the crossing of the rope. Then he made an emphatic "none of that" gesture, crossing the arms at the wrist and then opening the hands. The Texan then turned towards the group from Jesus and repeated the whole thing. The Chapayekas also held the rope in individual ways, some gradually tightened and moved closer to the other. Others pretended to give a sudden yank but in fact let the rope slide through their fingers. After the prayers at the stations the Chapayekas marched around all the groups, in two lines going in opposite directions. Before the last station a

Cabo took away the rope and the Chapayekas did not march around the groups. On the return to the church Pilate rode up to the main cross and dismounted. At the three crosses the big crucifix was put horizontal again and carried into church, the group flanked by the Fariseos. The Fariseos, Pilate in lead, marched back and forth inside the church three times. Each time they came a little further out. Then the Fariseos marched out to the main cross and lined up. From there the Fariseos marched between the main cross and headquarters, then the Chapayekas and Cabos marched three more times from the headquarters to about halfway to the main cross before finishing at the headquarters in the end.

### **6th Friday**

#### *A demasking*

On the morning of the sixth Friday konti there was a ritual for the demasking of a Chapayeka performer who had breached the rules of the Lenten season. As part of the punishment, his mask was taken away and burned, and he was prohibited from performing any more that year. I was told he would be able to perform again next year. In the church the Fariseos – the only ceremonial group present – were lined up and the flute and drum sounded as usual. Between the lines in front was a man, barefoot and bareheaded, a Yaqui rosary around his neck, wearing a collared shirt and black pants. The Fariseos marched, circling the main cross to the headquarters where the Chapayekas took off their masks. There were only a couple of Cabos and only a few people watching. I don't know if there was more to his punishment. I did see the man later among the spectators, watching all the rituals and talking to the Chapayekas in their sign language.

As the day wore on, spectators and food vendors started to arrive. The Chapayekas (without masks) and others cleaned up the plaza, sweeping up trash and leaves with brooms. The Fariseos went over to the Caballeros at the three crosses to talk, and the Angelitos entering the church were allowed to do so in peace. Today the gown of the big Virgin figure was a golden yellow. Colourful ribbons were tied on her arms. There were a lot of flowers in the church and candles burning. More Chapayekas arrived, among them a cholo. Two masked Chapayekas, the first and another orejona, went to collect the horse from the Caballeros. The Chapayekas went jogging along, knocking their knife and sword together at times. One Chapayeka took the lead rope in his left hand and peered at the horse with his knife above his eyes. The other was given a bag that held the ribbons to decorate the horse. Pilate went with them to the Fariseo headquarters. A Fariseo carried his spurs and the lance. At the

Fariseo flag the horse was passed on to the Fariseo carrying the spurs and lance and then to another who took the horse and tied him to a tree. The lance tip was kept in the church. The Fariseo took the lance to be prepared, the tip was put on and a pink cloth. On his way from the church to headquarters he went around the main cross. At the end of the day the same Fariseo took the lance back to the church to take off the tip and cloth.

More Chapayekas kept arriving. Popeye came, tossing candy to the children. The Cabo with him was carrying the stuffed toy monkey that Popeye usually had with him. Sometimes Popeye lunged at the children, who ran, but returned quickly, hoping for candy. Sometimes Popeye would make a lunge that would end in a stretched out position and then hand the candy to children. Popeye would sometimes also reward a child brave enough not to run away from him with candy. Later two new orejonas arrived. One of them watched a rider and horse passing through the plaza. The Chapayeka mounted his sword, and pawed at the ground like a horse, reaching behind to touch his "horse" with his knife. Today the *féria* was augmented by an inflatable jumping castle for the children.

In the church the Rezantes began to pray, the Cantoras took their positions and began to sing. One came a little later, joined the others and started singing. The Fariseos put on their capes and prepared. New Chapayekas arrived while the others were starting, including the elf. The Fariseos marched and lined up as usual. In the line the clowns fooled around with the shoe shining set. One of the clowns kept putting his foot out to be shined and then pulling it away. Finally two others held him so he couldn't pull away his foot. The yellow haired clown stole the smaller brush from the kit. The Chapayekas saw a toy money bill (from a cotton candy wrapper) on the ground and moved it around with their swords. All the Chapayekas wanted to take it, there was some pushing and shoving until one grabbed it with his hand and put it in his pocket. When Pilate marched out of the church, the Chapayekas scraped their swords and knives together. When an Angelito passed through the lines, a clown tried to grab her, but was deterred by the *madrina* shouting "Ave María Purísima!"

The konti was as the day before, the Chapayekas marched around the groups at all the stations except the last. Popeye paused to hand a candy through the open window to a woman with an infant in a parked car. At the station the Chapayekas marched in rhythm, shook their rattles, and waited, until the guards were changed, then circled around all the groups. The circling took a long time, it went on until the groups stopped at the next station. Today there were even more people joining the konti.

At the church the Fariseos lined up, the Chapayekas knocked their knife and sword together and shook their hips periodically, and fooled around while waiting in line. The yellow haired clown kicked the red striped one in the backside, who turned around and hit the yellow haired over the head with his sword. The yellow haired held his head as if badly hurt, then slowly and deliberately wiped his eyes and nose, first with his hand and then his sleeve. They kept on bickering. Then the yellow haired clown “wound up” the red stripe as if he had a crank handle, making him dance. The yellow haired clown held his hand in front of his mouth and shook with laughter. The clowns moved, bouncing rhythmically to the singing. The dog frightened the nearby children by suddenly turning and putting his head close to their face. This happened to me once as well and the effect was unnerving, something like the werewolves in films. The red striped clown took a small orange water gun out of his belt and showed it menacingly to the children and then pointed the gun. Almost all the Chapayekas were facing away from the church, communicating with one another, not paying attention to the singing and praying inside.

Finally the Fariseos marched, Pilate in front, first to the altar, then out halfway to the main cross, back to the altar, out to the main cross. Here they lined up and stopped, then to headquarters, back to the main cross, back to headquarters stopping half way, from the headquarters to the main cross back to the headquarters. At the end the Chapayekas and Cabos marched three more times between the headquarters and the halfway point to the main cross. Meanwhile dark was falling. The moon was shining and crows filled the air, as they did at this time of the year, adding to the unreal and intense effect. The red striped clown marched going exaggeratedly from one side to the other, sometimes crouching low to the ground. The devil marched in silence, without knocking his sword and knife together. In the church the other groups were already done, the food vendors packed up and the people started to leave.

### **San Ramos**

Saturday is the fiesta of San Ramos. A figure of Jesus on a burro is taken around to other towns and households along the way. The Chapayekas left the plaza on the road that goes north, toward the other towns, marching, wearing masks. They did not walk in lines, but in groups. The Cabos carried the hats of the Chapayekas. About an hour later a second group of Chapayekas passed, Popeye carrying a plastic cup for collecting money. The yellow haired clown had caught a ride on the back of a bicycle, waving at the other Chapayekas as he passed them by. Later men cut palm leaves and took them to the church for the next day.

Before Palm Sunday households may also hold fiestas to offer a place for Jesus to stay the night while he is wandering in the monte, as he has not yet been caught. In 2006 I was invited to one at a nearby ranch. The fiesta was given because of a manda made by the owner of the ranch who was now deceased, but his promise was nevertheless honored by his sons. On the way we saw the Cócorit Fariseos walking along the road, most of them carrying their masks in hand. I was told they were on their way to Loma de Guamuchil. At the ranch women were making large tortillas, and men were cutting meat hung on hooks. As guests we were shown around and taken to see the fighting cocks, cows and horses. Then we were served coffee and tortillas, later we all ate soup, vegetables, tortillas, and then potatoes and meat, with coke and *agua de horchata* to drink. Usually Catholics do not eat meat at this time of year, but for Yaqueis a meat stew, called *watabaki*, is traditional.

In the yard there was an enramada with an altar. When Fariseos arrived, from Loma de Guamuchil, they put their swords in front of it, sticking up from the ground, with two Chapayeka masks, the same way the headquarters is marked. Then they rested in the shade. The Cabo boys roamed around a little, they went to a road near by and played Chapayeka, marching knocking their sword and knife together and communicating in Chapayeka gestures. Later the Fariseos made the enramada larger. Leaves and branches resembling birches were brought in by car.

The Cócorit Fariseos arrived at the gate with a figure of San Ramos, the Chapayekas now wearing their masks. The women of the household received them at the gate, took the figure to the altar, and performed a short ceremony. Finally the women carried the figure back to the gate, and the Fariseos continued their journey. This was a visit to the household by San Ramos, also a blessing and a way of including all the households in the Yaquei land. At this moment the ritual was spatially at its largest before the concentration at the church at Holy Week, when Jesus would be taken captive and crucified.

Later Pascolas arrived for the fiesta in a car. Later still they got dressed next to the enramada. The harpist and violinist fiddler were already starting to play. The deer dance began in the afternoon, two rockets were let off to mark the beginning. The Pascolas danced, first with the masks at the side of the face, then on their face. The deer dancer prepared and danced first alone, then with a Pascola. There were different rhythms, songs and instruments for the different parts. At times the Pascolas got closer to the deer, as if they were searching. One was a young man, the two others were older. It was hot in the sun. The Chapayekas, without their masks, went to watch the deer dances. They were on one side of the enramada, the people of the household on the



other side and by the house. A bit later the church group from Loma de Guamuchil arrived. The Fariseos prepared and lined up in the usual manner, making two lines on the sides of the area in front of the altar. The deer group, now wearing sandals, danced backwards in front of the enramada, in front of the Fariseos and the church group. As they got closer to the altar, the others advanced. Later everyone went in turn to the altar to venerate, the Chapayekas without their masks. The household lined up in front of the enramada, the men on the left and women on the right (looking from the altar). The Chapayekas again took off their masks and all the ritual performers shook hands with members of the household. Then the Chapayekas put on their masks again, and speeches were given back and forth. Again, everyone went in turn to the altar. Afterwards a pink arch that had been there was taken away.

While the Chapayekas stood in line, they fooled around and teased each other. One, usually a clown or an animal, would leave his place in line and wander around in the middle. They played with a green ball. The clown played with children but in a manner more friendly than menacing. The clown drew a circle on the ground with his knife and then pretended to be looking the other way. When a child was brave enough to step into the circle, the clowns suddenly turned and frightened the child. When one Chapayeka shook his hips, so did the others. The Chapayekas beat a rhythm and danced.

Another clown, with a fringe of multicolored hair and a heart drawn on the bald crown of his head, took notice of my husband, who stood to the side, watching. The clown pointed at Elihú and made signs signifying his eyeglasses and earring (something not usually seen on men in Sonora) by drawing circles with his knife around his eyes and ear. He also tried to get the attention of others and pointed to Elihú. The others made dismissive gestures that Elihú took to mean "oh, leave him alone, let's not start with him." Other unmasked Fariseos were talking and a clown snuck up behind them as if to listen in on the conversation. I did not stay until the morning, but the dancing continued, and the fiesta went on all night.

## Chapter 4.2

### Holy Week

#### Palm Sunday

Early in the morning the doors of the church were already open, a candle burning in front of the big crucifix. All the saints were in their places as they had been on Friday, dressed and decorated with flowers. The big figure of the Virgin was still dressed in the gold gown and the ribbons. The figure of Jesus was dressed in a white skirt and ribbons. The headquarters were still empty. Two young men showed up with a cart, selling toys and balls and balloons. In 2004 and 2006 at this time the amusement park rides had already arrived, this year there weren't any. According to gossip the parties hadn't reached an agreement of terms.

At about 9.40 a.m. the first Chapayekas began to return. They were carrying palm leaves and wearing masks. The horse lunged at children to scare them, Chucky pointed his knife (actually carved and painted to look like a bloody knife) at them. At the church the Chapayekas greeted the three crosses, from there they went to the Fariseo headquarters, took off their masks and rested. Others went into the church, without their masks, taking in the palm leaves, which were placed on the altar next to the crucifix. When the first clown and the red stripe clown arrived, they stopped to look at the balloonvendors' cart, located close to the three crosses in the shade of the trees. The red stripe looked with his knife and scratched his head. The other, who was further back suddenly stomped his feet rapidly, several times. Perhaps to alert or scare the other Chapayeka, or foil his plans by getting the attention of the vendors? The red striped clown bent his knees and went into a squat, knees bent position, angled forward at the waist, arm stretched out, and moved in slow deliberate steps to steal a spray can left on top of the box. The vendors were talking and looking the other way, they noticed nothing, never realising a clown Chapayeka was very theatrically inching towards their merchandise. Suddenly the clown grabbed the spray can, spun around, and stuck it under his cape, still very exaggeratedly. Then both clowns, content, went back to the Fariseo headquarters. The Cabos and the spectators were amused, the vendors blissfully oblivious that they had been made ridiculous.

The red stripe clown had two pieces of cardboard tied around his feet with string. Later the clown was wearing his rattles again, which had possibly got broken on the trek through the monte. More palm leaves were brought. The Chapayekas were putting the white curtain in front of the church door.

The rest of the Chapayekas, the Fariseos and Pilate, without the black capes, came carrying San Ramos. Two orejona Chapayekas carried the back end. At the three crosses, the figure was put down. The Chapayekas who had arrived earlier, put on their masks and joined the others. The black coat clown was wearing sunglasses and carrying his clown doll on his back. The yellow haired clown was carrying his teddybear backpack. Everybody joined the group, then all went into the church, the Cantoras singing. There were palm leaves at the door, at the windows and the altar. The Fariseos lined up.

The Red stripe clown was now brandishing the stolen spray can and sprayed white foam onto the elf's toe. The elf looked in wonder at his foot, and the clown mimed laughter, shaking and holding his hand to his mouth, and then when the elf looked at him, the clown pointed to a small boy, blaming him. The clown mimed wiping his nose and then throwing the mucus at the elf's toe. The elf pointed to his mouth, miming saliva or vomit as if making sure he had understood correctly. The clown repeated his nose wiping, made a throwing gesture at the elf and again pointed to the boy in confirmation.

In the church there was singing and prayers, the Chapayekas knocked their weapons together and shook periodically. The Fariseos marched once circling the main cross and the Caballeros' cross. Then to headquarters, where the masks were removed. There were over 40 Chapayekas now. In the church the Rezante was putting palmleaves on a small table, a girl took the ribbons off of Ramos, then dressed the figure in a blue gown and put the ribbons back on. The Chapayekas, unmasked, were fixing up the PA system. The pilate lance was prepared.

The Fariseos began to prepare again. They marched to the Caballeros' cross where the Caballeros were waiting in line. The Fariseos lined up, the Chapayekas shook their rattles. Singing began, now it could be heard over the loudspeaker. After a while a Fariseo entered the church, came back out and said something to the Cabos. The Cabos took off their capes, hats, and sandals, leaving them where they had stood in line and entered the church to get their palm leaves. As they passed to enter the church the Chapayekas did not interfere much, just a little bit of pointing with knives. They interfered more when the Cabos come out. In 2006 the Chapayekas formed a kind of obstacle course by sticking out their swords and forcing the Cabos to jump. In 2007 they poked and hit at the Cabos with their swords. Once a clown stepped in front of the Cabos and wouldn't let them pass. The Cabos left the space between the lines and entered again after the clown. The Cabos put their ritual gear back on, and four Fariseos, two carrying leaves and two applying them, came out of

the church and put some leaves on each Chapayeka. The sheriff actually helped by lifting his coat, the others resisted and tried to run away. They nevertheless had leaves put onto them, into the rattle belt or in their pockets. Now also the spectators went to get leaves. Some left the line and went to get leaves by the side door. People pushed and shoved, the Rezante and the old Cantora were giving them out, as with the ashes. The leaves are folded into crosses and put in the house, outside the door. Some began to make the crosses at the church.

Now the left Fariseo line moved to the left from the church, to line up next to the fence. The first in line was Pilate, followed by the Jesus group with San Ramos, as Jesus was at this point represented entering Jerusalem riding a donkey. They went counter clockwise in a small circle to the main cross. A white curtain was drawn in front of the church door for this part. The Rezante passed to the front of the line carrying the pole with the cross. He placed the end of the pole in a box on the ground. The Cantora inside the church sang, flowers were tossed in the air around san Ramos, the Fariseo drum was sounded, and the group advanced. This was repeated three times. Then the Rezante knocked the box three times with the pole, the curtain was drawn and all passed into the church, where there was more singing and prayers. The Chapayekas kept fooling around with the spray, now they had two cans. Afterwards the Fariseos marched, only once, to the main cross, to headquarters, where the masks were taken off. In the church the church group was still singing. The table had been put into the corner, some people still went and took leaves. There were flowers on the floor. The lance was stripped of its cloth and tip. People began to leave. The first two Chapayekas, wearing their masks, Pilate, two Cabos, and two other Fariseos went to the three crosses where they left Pilate, the lance, and the spurs. The people and the flags stayed in place at the headquarters for a while, in the afternoon everything was packed up and all went home.

### **Miercoles de tinieblas**

*Miercoles de tinieblas* means twilight Wednesday. Painter (1986: 423) calls this the tenebrae. Today there were more enramadas up, one next to the Caballeros cross, another close to the place where the Last Supper would be held, and a third one for the Last Supper next to the Fariseo headquarters. Today the big Virgin figure had a white gown. The big candelabra was prepared, the Chapayekas went in ritual garb, but without masks, to get branches to make an arch at the altar behind the candles. The Chapayekas fetched Pilate from the Caballeros headquarters as before. From this day on,

the performers stay all day and overnight at the church, and Pilate stays with the Fariseos. Still new Chapayekas arrived, the president of the United States, later the rooster and the cannibal.

There were 15 candles in the candelabra, during the ritual they were put out one at a time. At the *tenebrae* the Fariseos reach the very innermost part of the church, and the church goes into darkness. At this point there are “no flowers and no light” (Olavarria 2003: 163, my translation). Later a new light is lit.

In the church the *Rezante* began to sing, reading from a photocopied paper. The *Cantoras* were silent for a long time. The Fariseos marched once and took their places in line. At the door Pilate made the sign of the cross with his lance and the flags were waved. The Fariseos stood in line formation. The Chapayekas were brought in pairs, one from each line, each followed by a *Cabo*, to search. On their way to the altar they crossed paths, some shook their hip rattles, then they got down on their side and dragged themselves on the ground, with one elbow on the ground, around the candelabra and arch. Twice the Chapayekas stopped and knocked their sword and knife together four times rapidly, repeating the knocking three times. After the circle was complete, they rose, shook, and left, scraping off their swords. When the Chapayekas inside knocked their knife and sword together, the others outside shook their hips.

The first clown and the yellow haired clown came together. The first clown had a yo-yo, and he stopped halfway to the altar to play with it. The other clown gestured “come on” with his knife and pointed at the arch. Then he pointed the knife at his wrist, as if at a watch, and finally leaned his elbow on his sword, buried his face in his palm and tapped his temple with his fingers (little finger, ring finger, middle finger, index finger) in despair. Finally the first clown came to the altar, shook and got down. After the tiniest of pointed pauses, the yellow haired one did so as well. After they had made the circuit, the first clown again stopped to play, and the yellow haired clown marched off rapidly to join the line, covering his face in his hand in despair. The first clown paused on his way to tease the Fariseo next to Pilate with the yo-yo.

The Chapayekas moved in sync, sometimes when one of the pair was late coming to the altar, the other one got down but waited for the other to start moving. The candles were put out at very long intervals; several pairs of Chapayekas went by without a candle being put out. The Chapayekas outside kept rhythm and danced. When the bell rang and a candle was put out, they moved closer towards the church, stomping their feet. Once when the

Chapayekas were advancing, the yellow haired clown and the elf turned around and went in the opposite direction, but faced with the other Chapayekas were forced to turn and continue towards the church. Later Rambo and the yellow-haired clown took turns dragging each other towards the church while the other resisted. The Chapayekas were again fooling around with the spray foam. They pushed and shoved each other. A boy nudged the elf, who turned and asked "who was that?" (turning from one side to the other, as if looking for something and looking at others to get an answer). The other kids pointed out the culprit and the elf turned, very slowly and menacingly, towards the boy. It seemed everybody held their breath, worrying what the Chapayeka would do. Then the elf tapped his head with his knife as if to say "think!" and then shook his knife in a scolding motion at the boy. The first clown tried to pull a small boy away from his father who resisted, holding on to the boy, smiling. Then the Chapayeka gave something, which might have been the yo-yo, to the boy.

Finally the last candle was put out, there were screams from the dark church, all the Chapayekas rushed inside, the ones who did not fit, knelt outside the church. They took off their masks. The godparents had belts, first the godparent traced a cross on the back of the Chapayeka, then hit him. Some hit three times, others four or more. One year I was told that a young woman was asked to "be the *madrina*" to her uncle, to go and perform the hitting, just a few moments before the ritual. This did not involve further obligation to her. The Chapayeka performer whose mask had been taken away and burned was also taken into the church by a Cabo. Then the singing started again, the masks were put on again and the light was turned back on. The red-striped clown stayed kneeling, without his mask. The other Chapayekas came to see him, some caressed his back with their knives. He made a violent negative gesture with his hand at the side of his head. This might have meant that no-one had given him the whipping, but I was not able to ascertain this. All the Chapayekas participated this year; this could be seen by the fact that there were no masks left at the headquarters. Finally as all others were ready, the red striped clown had to put his mask back on and join the others. The *Fariseos* marched to the maincross and then to headquarters.

### **Maundy Thursday**

On this day, Jesus is taken prisoner. There are several Chapayeka relays since the morning. About 7.30 the first Chapayeka relay around the konti took place. The Chapayekas went and took places at the stations on the konti, accompanied by Cabos. On one round I counted 29 Chapayekas who took part

in carrying the clapper. Others, like the horse and the dog, ran around, played, or stood around and watched. A sacristan came out of the church with the clapper, a wooden block with two metal hinges, which makes a clapping sound when it is rapidly twirled back and forth. At the main cross he gave the clapper to the first Chapayeka, who took it to the three crosses where the second Chapayeka was waiting. After this, the order varied. At the next station, the Chapayeka passed the clapper to the next, both Chapayekas facing away from each other, from left hand to left, as usual.

The relays, especially the moment of passing the clapper, provided a major chance for improvised clowning. The Chapayekas had a toy spider that squeaked when squeezed (they were using this the previous year as well). An orejona was pulling it along the ground, when another tried to stab it with his sword, finally stepped on the cord so the orejona could not pull it away, and then beat the spider energetically with his knife. The first orejona watched this, then poked the spider with his sword to make it squeak, seemed to be content that the spider was all right, and continued on his way, dragging the spider. The red stripe clown passed the clapper on to the elf, who took the clapper but turned around and went in the wrong direction, following the red stripe clown who was on his way back to his position. The clown noticed, turned the elf slowly around by the shoulders and then gave him a hard shove in the right direction. Rambo and one of the clowns made fun of the cannibal by running behind him imitating his way of running. The cannibal held his sword up over his head like a spear and menaced them. The horse kicked backwards towards an orejona following him.

The kids delighted in this part, and they were mostly the only spectators, except some passing adults who paused briefly to watch. The children played a game of chicken by getting as close to the Chapayekas as they dared and the Chapayekas tried to catch them. In 2007 several children were caught. Once the Chapayekas caught someone, they seemed more curious than menacing. They only caught boys. They sometimes bothered passing men, for example, in 2006 a man passing on a bicycle was surprised by a Chapayeka who had jumped on the back of his bicycle to catch a ride. Women and girls were generally left alone, although the girl children were also chased. I was told by a Chapayeka performer that the Chapayekas have to avoid women. In 2007 some small girls kept whispering to themselves, "*da miedo, no hace nada*" (it's scary, they won't do anything). At some point they were worried and said that they would go and fetch one girl's mother if the Chapayekas would catch a child. They asked me if the Chapayekas would harm the boys they had caught or if they were just playing. I asked them if

they thought the Chapayekas would really hurt a child, and they said they weren't sure. They also said that since I was an adult, I wouldn't be scared, and hid behind me for safety. They giggled when I repeated the commonly made joke by parents with children, pretending to offer the girls to the Chapayekas saying "here they are!" One boy, brave until being caught, lost his nerve surrounded by several Chapayekas, who were examining him with their knives. The clown with the foam spray was holding the bottle as if ready to spray the boy in the face. When the boy began to cry, the Chapayekas stopped poking him and began to pat and caress him clumsily. Finally an orejona picked him up in his arms like an infant and rocked him back and forth. All this made the boy cry even harder. This goes to show that the Chapayekas can be quite frightening, as this was an older boy of maybe 11 or 12, who had been very unafraid until now. Also it is an example of the many ways in which the Chapayekas react inventively. They have to stay in the Chapayeka role and remain distant and respected. Unless they were prepared to really harm the boy, they would soon have been against a wall in trying to scare him more, so they followed another route that opens up: comforting him. The Chapayekas knew full well that this would not really comfort the boy, as maybe leaving him alone or taking off the masks might.

The Chapayekas also discovered another way of dealing with the bothersome boys. A police pick-up truck was parked by the konti, the police watching the relay. The Chapayekas, Rambo and an orejona, looked at the pick-up, and marched the boy they were holding between them to the car and showed him, making signs, to the police, who laughed and gestured towards the bed of the pick-up, so the Chapayekas lifted the boy in and returned to their positions. They repeated this a few times. The police have no jurisdiction in the Yaqui areas, but I saw patrol cars pass much more often in Córorit during the Easter season. One family who had been taking pictures of the Chapayekas had their camera taken away, and complained to the police, who said they could do nothing.

Sudden sounds, such as the bus, made the Chapayekas spook and turn to look. Sometimes the Chapayekas did not give the clapper to the next Chapayeka right away. In one such instance the next in line began to move his hand and started to walk forward, then looked at his hand and noticed with a start that he did not have the clapper. After the third round of the konti the Chapayekas returned to headquarters as soon as their part was done. On Thursday morning the Chapayekas made three rounds, the Rezante taking the clapper into the church and out again for each round. Next there was a konti, without the flower mat or the big crucifix, only a small one. The man carrying



the small crucifix, the Viejito, and the three boys carrying the staffs were barefoot. There were no stops, only the flag was waved at the stations. There were 55 Chapayekas now. On the return to the church, the Caballeros stopped before the tree on the right side, and went directly to their headquarters from there. The church group sang in the church, then the Fariseos marched to their headquarters. The Chapayekas went again to take their places on the konti for another relay.

Rambo forced one of the Cabos to hand over his bottle of Coca-Cola, marched away triumphantly, kicking his feet high, back held erect, pretended to drink from the bottle, "got drunk" and staggered around, almost falling down. The Chapayekas caught a boy and sprayed him with foam. They took a shoe from another and played with it for a while before returning it. The yellow haired clown kicked the next Chapayeka in the pants after passing on the clapper. After three rounds of relay, there was a second konti, as before, at the end the Fariseos marched about 10 meters out of the church, then returned. When they next left the church the rhythm changed, then they marched to the Caballero cross, where the rhythm changed again, and then to the headquarters. The Chapayekas trotted off to take their places on the konti, the Cabos ran. The Rezante was already coming out of the church with the clapper.

When the first clown got the clapper, he "turned it on," stamping his foot down like starting a motorcycle. When the clapper was approaching the red stripe clown, he pretended to pull it towards himself as if with a rope. Rambo had taken a boy prisoner, holding him by the shirt. When it was his turn, he wouldn't let the boy go, but forced him to run along. Then he made the boy sit down and "combed" his hair with his knife. Chucky came along and wanted to touch the prisoner with his knife but Rambo wouldn't allow it and knocked Chucky's knife away with his own. The yellow haired clown was playing baseball with kids, holding his sword like a bat. After three relays, there was a third konti.

After this, there was a short ceremony at the Last Supper enramada. The Chapayekas carried their masks in their hands, the other Fariseos were without hats. The drum was sounded a few times, then the flag is waved, the Fariseos cross themselves, put their hats back on. Then there was a break from rituals, during which the Chapayekas built several birch arches over the three crosses to represent Gethsemane where Jesus would be caught. The Cantoras were resting in the church on *petate* mats.

### **The Last Supper and the capture of Jesus**

The Last Supper does not take place in Arizona, but it is a usual part of the ritual in Sonora (Olavarría 2003: 165). The Fariseos marched into the church. After some singing and prayers, all marched out and circled to the Last Supper enramada. There were 12 boys dressed in gowns and the young man, who would now take the part of Jesus as the Viejito sitting in the enramada. The Cantoras and Rezantes kneeled in the area in front of the enramada, the Fariseos lined up on the sides, and two Chapayekas at a time were brought to examine the scene and determine whether it was Jesus. They held small twigs, which they passed to the next Chapayeka after taking their turn. One Chapayeka held a notebook with a drawing of the Last Supper (like da Vinci's painting), which they compared to the scene. The first two Chapayekas to appear at the beginning of Easter searched first. At first there was silence, then the Chapayekas shook their rattles and the Cantoras began to sing. In 2006 the sheriff carried a walkie talkie, into which he pretended to speak. He held it up to the Cantoras as well, as if to offer proof to whoever was listening at the other end. Food was brought from the kitchen, passed on by a line of men. First they lifted it to their nose to sniff, then they moved it on. At the end of the line the Chapayekas fooled around, the rooster made attacks at the other Chapayekas. Some took off their masks momentarily, with the Cabos helping and giving cover – this was happening at the hottest time of day.

After the Last Supper was over, all marched back into church. The Viejito had slipped away. Then the Fariseos ran fast around the konti, and lined up at the church. The Viejito as well as a Jesus figure were now at the three crosses. The Viejito had a white sheet that covered his head. He was barefoot and shirtless, his pantlegs rolled up. The Angelitos and godparents took places on either side of the three crosses, the Rezantes and Cantoras behind. Pilate and the Fariseo flagbearer galloped around the konti on horses.

The Fariseos lined up and marched to the doors of the church. They marched back and forth three times. When the Fariseos stopped the first two Chapayekas sat on the ground. The Cantoras sang. The Chapayekas pointed to the crosses. They used their swords like telescopes to look. The first Chapayekas came cantering, straddling their swords as if riding horses, and searched at the three crosses. The next to come was an orejona, who had also done some important duties. When they returned to the others they communicated as if to say, there he is, Jesus is there. The next was a rey, then a viejito. The Chapayekas got up, the Fariseos marched. They were getting closer now. Three times Pilate passed next to the trees and asked if "he is there." The previous year's Pilate shouted the question as he turned, in 2007 pilate

stopped, stepped to the side and asked. On the third time the Fariseos stopped, the rhythm changed, then pilate motioned with his lance for the Chapayekas to come over. The Chapayekas came and surrounded the crosses at the foot of the trees, got down on one knee, removed their masks and howled and barked, then put the masks back on and tore down the trees. The godparents and Angelitos surrounded Jesus. The Rezantes and Cantoras joined the others, the Chapayekas returned to lines. The Caballeros and Fariseos carried the Jesus figure, the Viejito now had a black cord around his neck. The white sheet still covered his head. A Caballero followed carrying a sword. The groups entered the church, singing.

### **The running of the Viejito**

The first to come out of the church again were Fariseos, who ran to the konti, then the Viejito, the cord still around his neck. At the three crosses he sat on the back of first Chapayeka, then hit him with his palm branch. This was repeated at the next station. A few Chapayekas, a Fariseo, and people armed with palm branches to defend Jesus stayed at the three crosses. This part is described quite differently for both Arizona and Sonora: In Arizona a Chapayeka takes the part of Jesus, in Sonora it was previously an old, respected man who goes through this “minor ordeal” as an honor (Spicer 1980: 83).

In Cócorit, it is a young man, and the part is quite extreme. Soon after starting off, Jesus breaks away from the Fariseos and makes a run for it. In 2007 Jesus came running towards the plaza alone and ahead of the pack chasing him, the Fariseos almost caught him, he dropped the branch but escaped, and got to the three crosses where the godparents were ready to protect him, stepping between him and the Fariseos and beating the Fariseos with branches. Jesus was given water and covered with a sheet. He was taken towards the church, to a chair at the main cross.

The running of the Viejito was one of the most popular moments of the ritual, impressive in its violence. The crowds were very big each year. In 2004 I saw fighting between those who protect the stations and the Chapayekas. A Chapayeka apparently too carried away by the situation and was going to hit a man with his sword, when a Cabo came up and hit the Chapayeka across the wrist. Later I saw the Chapayeka tied up next to the church as punishment. Later he had a bandage on his arm.

After the running of the Viejito, Chapayekas asked for money by shaking cups or jars with coins, pointing to their elbows, a gesture which indicates patches and means cheapskate in Mexico, and making sweeping ‘all

of you' gestures. The Chapayekas danced and shook their thanks when someone put money in their cup. A young girl told one of the clowns to "do the clown dance," the clown obliged, holding his sword with both hands, tip on the ground and shuffling his feet. Then the girl put money into the clown's cup and he shook his thanks. Jesus was taken to the church, the Fariseos marched around the crosses and to the headquarters where the Chapayekas took off their masks.

In the church the Jesus figure was guarded by two Chapayekas holding onto black cords attached to the figure. Two Cabos were with them. These guards were changed periodically, the Cabos marching from the headquarters to bring new ones and take the old ones away. The Chapayekas instructed the new ones on how to do their duty, pointing to Jesus, the rope and to the people. When people went to put money into a plate in front of Jesus, the Chapayekas shook a thank you and peered at the plate to see how much had been donated. Often they made the cheapskate sign and gestured for people to come on up and give money. The others rested. Some said the guard stays all night, others until midnight or 5 a.m. At nine p.m. they were still there. In 2006 the guards left early because there was a talk over what had happened in the running of the Viejito when Jesus had fallen. Then they left the Jesus figure alone in the church.

### **Good Friday**

In the morning there was a konti. Now the big Virgin figure had a light violet gown. The cloth on Pilate's lance had been changed to red, anticipating the shedding of blood. Almost all the Chapayekas were present, I counted 49 in 2007. Other years there were also close to 50. After the konti there was a Chapayeka relay with the clapper. The horse and the dog ran around again, like wild animals, the others tried to catch them. The horse kicked out and the dog made attempts to attack the other Chapayekas. An orejona pet the dog, who lay down at his feet like a loyal pet. The ape hung placidly from a branch of a tree by one hand, bending his feet so they didn't touch the ground. Two orejonas and Rambo did an imitation of the deer dance while waiting by the station for the clapper to come round. Rambo and the other orejona sat on the ground with their legs folded and pretended to play the instruments, tapping out a rhythm with knife and sword while the other orejona danced. He danced well, I wondered if he actually was a deer dancer. At the same time the movements were exaggerated, he shook his behind so that the rattles shook and used the movements to kick sand at his musicians with the movement of

pawing with the feet. The stance was the classic deer dancer pose, the knees bent, bending forward at the waist, the knife and sword held like rattles.

The Chapayekas were catching children and taking some to the police truck again. Another orejona examined the police car from the front, when the siren made a sound, all the Chapayekas spooked and jumped away. An orejona scratched the ape, who moved his body up and down rhythmically. A small boy of maybe three or four was frightened but also intrigued by the Chapayeka. The Chapayeka, an orejona, stretched out his hand for the boy to touch. The boy approached the Chapayeka, encouraged by his bigger sister. The Chapayeka turned slightly, and the boy retracted. This was repeated. Then the boy stretched out his little fist in the air, as if in a salute, and the Chapayeka made the same gesture.

After the third relay the Chapayekas returned to headquarters and took off their masks. The bier was prepared for Jesus's corpse. The Fariseos prepared. They marched into the church, circling the Caballeros cross. Some of the Chapayekas were late and came running to join the lines. There was another konti. In the church the Cantoras and Rezantes were singing "*Santo, Santo, Santo*" (Holy, Holy, Holy). The Fariseos marched in rhythm inside the church to the altar, out, and back to the altar. The song ended, there was prayer, the Fariseos marched in the normal marching step out, circled the crosses and returned to headquarters.

There was another relay. The first clown stayed back at the Caballeros headquarters to bother the Caballeros. He listened to their talk, scrouching down like an eavesdropper. Then he took an empty tricycle with a delivery basket and tried to ride it. He almost fell, twice. He was making gestures to a rey at the station to come and join him. Then he returned the tricycle to its owner, a food vendor, shook his thanks and then told the rey about it in signs, how he rode and almost fell. He held his hands out in front of his body as if holding the handlebars, turned the imaginary handlebars and then made a circling motion to the side to indicate falling over. Then he wanted to climb up into the bed of the police pick-up, hiding behind the truck, peeking to see if the police officers were watching.

The Chapayekas also commented upon the trash in the church plaza. They pointed to individual pieces of trash or moved them with their sword, then made sweeping motions that covered the entire plaza. Sometimes they would get the attention of a boy and point to him, then pick up a piece of trash with the sword and tried to get the boy to pick up the trash. Rambo caught a boy, sat on the ground and pulled the boy down with him. Rambo seemed to look for lice on the boys head, tapping him sharply on the head with his knife

(I wasn't sure if he was supposed to be killing a louse or possibly disciplining the boy). Then Rambo wanted to get up. He made signs for the boy to get up and then when the boy was up, reached out his hand so the boy had to help Rambo up. Then Rambo carried the boy to the trampoline and tossed him on it.

Much of the interaction with the Chapayekas is playful, but they are unpredictable. Also, it is not good to get too friendly with them, and they are associated with temptation. A Yaqui woman from Potam said that they will tempt you to make a mistake and then punish you for it. In the kontis, mothers scold children who get too close. One small boy – too young to be frightened – was happily marching along next to the yellow haired clown. When his mother noticed, she got angry and scolded him to get away.

People called out “Chucky!” or “*muñeco diabólico!*” (demon doll) to Chucky. A father passing by with two children offered them to Chucky, saying here they are. The children pulled on his hands, frightened. Rambo put himself next to a teenage boy sitting on the back of a truck, and in imitation of the teenager's pose, leaned back in an exaggeratedly relaxed way, made the peace sign and other hand signals at kids passing by. The teenager noticed he was being mocked and looked uncomfortable, but did not do anything.

There was another konti, now with the flower mat and the big crucifix. This time there were stops at the stations, a rope separating Jesus and the Virgin. The Chapayekas circled the groups as before. At the stations the gospel was read in Spanish. Our Father was also recited. Jesus was now held by the Fariseos, when the groups returned to the church they sang, *ya le llevan preso* (now he is prisoner). The Fariseos marched, but instead of going to the headquarters, they returned to the church. The horse was again brought out for Pilate. After seeing this, the charro wanted to ride the Chapayeka horse. When the Angelitos came out of the church for the konti, the first clown reached out for one and her padrino hit him with the palmbranch. The madrina showed her Yaqui rosary to the Chapayekas. There was another konti with the small Jesus figurine but without the Virgin. A Rezante carried incense. There were four stops, at the first, fifth, ninth and thirteenth stations. On the return to the church, the Fariseos marched as before.

There were more preparations, more birches brought, flowers were put on the bier. The crosses at the stations were taken down, laid on the ground. Birch arches were put on the four stations where there were stops on the earlier konti. One Chapayeka (without the mask) and two Fariseos put up the arches and took down the crosses. There were lots of cars now, and parking was being offered for 10 pesos, and there were a few signs of “bathrooms for 3

pesos" at the gates of nearby houses. There were also many different food stalls around the plaza, offering a variety of choice from seafood to pizza.

The Fariseos prepared. The church group sang. The Fariseos marched into the church, where there were two petate mats, one close to the door, another one half way to the altar. At this point, called the *muhti*, all the performers venerate the figures in the church. According to Painter in Arizona this takes place after the crucifixion (Painter 1986: 460). Next to the first petate there was a figure of Bill Clinton playing the saxophone and a plate for money. There was a plate at the other one also. I was later told the Clinton belonged to the Chapayekas, "like their saint."

The performers did the *muhti* in pairs, right hand in right hand, some taking both hands. The pair kneeled at the first petate, and made the sign of the cross with the head. Then they moved to the next one, where they did the same. Then they made a third stop closer to the altar. After this the pairs returned backwards, passing under the hands of the pair coming forwards. All took off their shoes, masks, hats, rattles, belts, everything, until they were barefoot and only wearing the white pants and shirt. Only the Chapayekas kept a scarf on their head. Pilate went in his stocking feet. The church group took off their shoes. As soon as they were done with the *muhti*, the performers returned to their place in line and put their clothes back on. The soundscape kept changing throughout, as there were no Chapayekas rattling for a while, no drum nor flute. The singing continued throughout, as there were always people singing. After everyone had completed the *muhti*, the Fariseos marched once and went to the headquarters where they took off their masks. At this point people also performed small *mandas*, they lit candles in the church, some came walking on their knees from the door, the main cross, or the three crosses. Some Chapayekas did it too, without the mask.

The Chapayekas built an arch of branches on the altar. There were public announcements to get cars out of the way also reminding people not to take photos. The Fariseos marched once into the church, then ran around the *konti* at full speed. Now the main cross had been laid down as well, and was covered in palm leaves. Pilate, the flagman and two others galloped around the *konti* on horses. Some Chapayekas stayed at the main cross.

Now came the moment of crucifixion. The Fariseos lined up and marched to the door. The captain turned back towards the lines and held up his hands up over his head to demonstrate the motion used at this part, where the knife and sword are rhythmically rubbed together, as if sharpening the blades. After becoming accustomed to the sound of knife and sword being knocked together in the ubiquitous tapping rhythm, this new sound seemed

aggressive and frightening. The Fariseos marched into the church and back and forth in front of the big crucifix at the altar, the rhythm changed to a more intense one. They went back and forth three times, then they ran helter skelter out of the church, the sound of steady marching changing to chaos. The feeling was intense, the church was filled with people and the unrelenting sound of the wooden weapons and the marching feet built up the tension. This was repeated several times, on the sixth the Fariseos charged out and ran around the konti, clockwise now, in the opposite of the normal anti-clockwise direction. After weeks of processions and dozens of anti-clockwise rounds, the sudden and violent change of direction created a sense of vertigo, the world turning upside down.

Pilate was still in the church, the lance had now been covered with a black cloth. The church group surrounded the crucifix. They took the Jesus figure down from the cross and put him on the bier. Pilate and the three others cantered around the konti, again clockwise. The Fariseos lined up at the main cross. Next there was a funeral konti, now all the Virgin figures were draped in black. The men carrying the bier were completely covered with white sheets, tied with cords to resemble robes. Although the Chapayekas did react in the usual exaggerated Chapayeka manner, they were comparatively subdued during the konti. The elf danced a little, an orejona spooked a little at a loud noise. There was a general feeling of grief and sadness. Many people in the procession carried candles. A couple of Chapayekas, without masks, walked with the people. The Chapayekas that had hats on the masks had taken them off. In 2004 the deer dancer Chapayeka had put the deer head so that it was hanging down. Another Chapayeka pointed at it and the deer dancer explained, making the motion of drawing the knife across his throat. Each year I saw the Chapayekas discuss the taking off the hats in sign language, pointing it out to each other making signs of cutting the throat. It seems this was in recognition of the death of Jesus.

There were four stops on the konti, at the same stations as before. After the konti, there were more mandas, people walking to the altar on their knees, holding candles, some helped by padrinos. After the konti the bier was put in the church and the Chapayekas stood guard again, two at a time, each with a leaf. They stroked the bier with the leaves, sometimes they pretended to stomp on imaginary bugs that fell from the bier. The church was very beautiful; there were dozens of candles burning and many many flowers. Many people came to pay their respects to Jesus at His wake. They touched the figure's feet, some kissed them. When people put money on a plate next to the figure, the Chapayekas shook their thanks. Later there were two more kontis with the bier



and the empty cross of the big crucifix. On the return to the church the third time, the Fariseos marched to headquarters.

### **The encuentro**

Late on Friday night there was the *encuentro*. This meeting marks the moment of resurrection and symbolizes the meeting of St. John the Baptist and Veronica when she tells him she has seen the empty tomb of Jesus. One group went around the konti with the figure of St. John, draped in black, clockwise and another with the figure of Veronica went counterclockwise. The groups, also Fariseos including masked Chapayekas with both groups, started off at the same time. When they met at about halfway around the konti, rockets were let off, and the two groups went running as fast as they could back to the church in the same direction as they started. The group that reaches the church first wins and later there will be a celebration. It is considered good luck to "run with the saints." In 2007 St. John won, which meant the midsummer celebration would be bigger that year. The running was difficult, as it was dark, the dirt road was uneven and rocky, and there were running Chapayekas and people everywhere. People arrived at the church out of breath. Nevertheless, it was a moment of fun and excitement. Now that Jesus had risen and left the grave, the big Virgin figure was dressed in her blue gown, and the Veronica figure had also lost the signs of mourning. As the Fariseos were unaware that Jesus had risen, they continued to guard the bier.

### **The Chapayeka fiesta**

The Fariseos marched into the church, the drum was now covered with a black cloth. Two clowns were left to guard the bier. The captain gave them a speech reminding them to do their duty and not to sleep. He pointed at the body they must keep guard. The clowns, red stripe and another with a black coat, nodded solemnly. As soon as the others left, the red stripe began to nod sleepily. The other watched the rest of the Fariseos leave, sitting daintily legs crossed, fingers crossed over his knee, bobbing his head in time to the marching. The clown doll was brought to the clowns. They compared the doll to each other and apparently tried to figure out who it resembles more, putting the doll next to one or the other, gesturing and pointing and shaking their heads yes and no. Then they put the doll into the bier. The Fariseos marched again, now there was also music made by three Chapayekas playing guitar, fiddle and base. They set up the instruments around the bier, played music and pretended to drink from empty Tecate beer cans. Now the first clown and the apache also joined the others in the church. The Fariseos marched again,

and this time a group of orejonas were left in the church to join the party. After a while the Fariseos took the bier outside, while in the church the men who had carried the bier before, still wearing the sheets, put the Jesus figure back on the large crucifix.

The Chapayekas' party was now outside, and also the ape, Hulk Hogan, Chucky, the charro and the elf had now joined in. First they went and danced at the Caballero headquarters, then at where the Matachin headquarters would be, then at the location of the Last Supper, then at the Fariseo headquarters. The charro put last year's Chapayeka deer head on his head and danced. The apache danced holding his bow high in the air, arm up, bending down at the waist and lifting his knees high. The drunk Chapayekas danced, and the band played music. Many of the songs they played were recognizable, Matachini music, popular songs, las mañanitas, and so on. The musicians played well. One of the cholos had his plastic bag he was sniffing like glue. The Chapayeka fiesta was the rowdiest part of their performance, and the only time when the Chapayekas wandered at times without Cabos. Some of the other Chapayekas were already asleep around the fire at the headquarters. The party ended around 3 a.m. and the main cross was put up again.

### **Sábado de Gloria**

On Saturday morning at 7.30 "*malhumor*," the Judas effigy, was already in place at the main cross. The figure was made of straw and stuffed into old clothes, a collared button-down shirt and pants. Both were navy blue, the shirt had flags on it. The previous year the effigy had been dressed in jeans and a light colored shirt. Malhumor was wearing an orejona mask from the previous year. The effigy had a Fariseo knife and sword tied to its hands. At its feet were sacks filled with the leftover supplies for making the masks. Children were fascinated by the malhumor, they sat in front of it gazing raptly at the figure. The burro that would take malhumor around the konti was waiting at the headquarters. The godparents took the Chapayekas to eat breakfast on Holy Saturday, and some could be seen eating at the foodstands. Others had left the area with their godparents, the only time they may do so on other than for the rituals. In the church a white curtain was hung in front of the altar. There were candles at the base of the main cross. People came and tied ribbons to the arms of malhumor, for mandas I was told, and brought more sacks. The Chapayekas built an enramada at the three crosses. Singing began in the church. The Matachini headaddresses were now visible at the Matachini headquarters, indicating their future appearance.

### **Judas konti**

The Fariseos marched to the main cross and did a konti with the malhumor and the burro, moving in the clockwise (opposite from the usual counterclockwise) direction. Malhumor was seated on the burro, with the first clown behind it to hold the effigy in place. The Chapayeka musicians who played at the Chapayeka fiesta had their instruments and one Chapayeka carried incense in a metal bucket. The group walked around the konti in a steady brisk pace, making no stops. There were quite a lot of people, although not nearly as much as on the kontis with Jesus. There was also more variety to the group, men and women, although most were probably in their early thirties or younger. The atmosphere was happy and festive, the pace was lively and so was the music. Now the placements were reversed, the Fariseos were in the middle and the people at the sides, although sometimes the groups mixed. People were allowed to keep their hats on which was not allowed in normal kontis. The red striped clown occasionally sprayed foam on people. In 2006 I noted some stops, but not at all the stations. In 2006 the Chapayekas also carried a white flag as a sign of surrender. After the konti, malhumor was replaced at the main cross and the Chapayekas said their goodbyes. They danced and played music. They went up to malhumor one by one and embraced him. The Chapayekas took off their scarves, sunglasses, and other small paraphernalia and put them on malhumor. In 2006 the white flag was put on him as well. Rockets and aerosol cans were put inside the effigy's shirt to explode when the pyre would be lit.

### **"The killing of the animals"**

Next was the killing of animals. I was told this is a show for the crowds, but some also said that it is traditional. I saw it each year, but there is no mention of it in ethnography. Cabos and Chapayekas went from the maincross to the three crosses, where the Cabos formed a large circle (about 20 meters in diameter), holding onto the tips of each other's swords. Some of the Chapayekas joined a little later, knocking their knife and sword together to open a path through the crowd. Two Cabos took two birches and held them up like trees. I was told this was to represent the monte. The apache took his bow and bent it. He hunted down and "killed" the animal Chapayekas one by one. The vampire was also included; the apache put his knife and sword in the form of a cross and deterred the vampire like this. In 2006 a clown was also killed. A Chapayeka performer had told me that the clown can take the place of an absent Chapayeka of another kind, so perhaps the clown took part in the killing of the animals in the place of another Chapayeka. In 2006 when there

were two apaches, in the end they pretended to shoot arrows at each other. In 2006 when there were two roosters, they had a cockfight first. Sometimes this part is also called cutting the ear. When the apache killed the Chapayeka, he made a small tear in the ear.

The Chapayekas asked for money during this part with their collection jars. They danced and shook a thank you when they were given money. After about 45 minutes the Chapayekas finished. The ones that had been “killed” had already returned to headquarters, the rest also went to headquarters and took off their masks.

Next the Fariseos prepared and went to march at the side of the church, between their headquarters and the first station. They marched around and around, tree leaves in the hats. Gradually the marching group moved closer to the road. There were now a total of 55 Chapayekas. Three flowermats were taken to the church. For some reason the charro came to the effigy at the main cross, talked to malhumor and took off his mask, leaving it at the foot of the pyre. He put his hat on the effigy’s head. He took off his belt and coat and gave them to his madrina. This indicated that he wouldn’t take part in the traditional demasking, although I never found out why.

### **La Gloria – the final battle**

At noon the Fariseos were at their headquarters again. At 12.10 the drum was sounded many times. The Fariseos marched three times between the headquarters and the main cross. The Chapayekas waved gaily as they went, at each other and at the spectators. “*Ya se van ya se van*,” someone chanted in the crowd (they’re leaving, they’re leaving). A woman next to me whispered loudly *ya se van* as the first clown passed, and in response he sprayed us with foam from the spraycan. There was clearly less respect towards the Chapayekas now.

The Fariseos marched between the church and the main cross three times. The rhythm and knocking was quick. They stopped and the godparents went to tie scarves around the arms of their godchildren. The singing in the church began. The Fariseos made the gesture of sharpening the blades, shook their hip rattles, and marched. The Pascolas and deer dancer came between the lines to get something from the main cross, and then returned to the church. The Fariseos stood in line, knocking out the rhythm. Again, the spectators outside were allowed to keep their hats on.

Next the Fariseos marched and then ran three times. When they ran, they ran fast, first into the church and then to the main cross where they would take off their ritual gear little by little. The first time after they ran they gave

their sandals and ankle rattles to the godparents, on the second the hip rattle. The first clown shook his hips, when there was no sound, he shook his head “no.” On the third round they threw the masks on the pyre: the Chapayekas ran up to the pyre, got down on one knee, took the mask off quickly and flung it at the pyre, then the godparents threw a blanket over their head and rushed them into the church. After the slow, solemn, and meticulous way the masks had been treated up to now, it was a shock to see them treated so brusquely.

In 2004 and 2006 I observed this part inside the church. There was a curtain in front of the altar. The Fariseos made their last attack, marching toward the altar. To deter them, the deer and the Pascolas danced, and the church group sang and threw flowers. When the flowers were thrown, the Fariseos ran as fast as they could, the steady sound and movement of marching turned to chaos. Inside, this was the moment the Caballeros switched to the side of the church. They went to stand in front of the altar and pointed their swords at the Fariseos. When Pilate pointed his lance at the deer, the deer lowered his antlers and faced Pilate. Flowers were thrown outside as well. In 2006 eggshells filled with confetti were sold to be thrown at the Chapayekas. I did not see this in 2004 or 2007, and some of the people I talked to hadn’t seen this. The egg I bought in 2006 had a horned figure, perhaps a Chapayeka or a devil, painted on it.



*Figure 5. Eggshell filled with confetti*

After all the regalia had been removed, the Chapayekas put their sandals back on. All had at least a scarf over their head; some were completely covered with the blanket. The godparents carried the rest of their things. The pyre was prepared, the masks and the Fariseo knives and swords were placed on the pyre neatly, the masks facing in. The Matachinis danced now, first outside the church, then inside. In 2007 there were 11 Matachinis. Some of the Chapayekas also danced as Matachinis, continuing their ritual work. The deer danced with the Pascolas outside the church under the tree on the left of the maincross. The godparents brought Pilate to the main cross, he kneeled, then the godparents led him away again. The Fariseos milled around at the headquarters with each other and the godparents. Some rested or had a snack. At two p.m. the pyre was lit, about 10 minutes later the cans and rockets started exploding. Later in the afternoon the deer danced in the enramada at the three crosses. Most of the spectators were gone by this point, although many Fariseos were still eating at the foodstands. The lotería was still going on. The two saved masks were at the Fariseo flag face down. At about 6 p.m. the Matachinis danced the maypole dance. The deer dance went on all night in the enramada at the three crosses.

### **Sunday – La Gloria chiquita**

In the morning a path for *la Gloria chiquita*, “the little Gloria” had been prepared with green leaves from the three crosses to the church. There was a small table at the three crosses, covered by a white cloth and also a red cloth with a white cross. The table was in place on Saturday, on Sunday the Jesus figure was carried on it. Today there were very few spectators. On this day, all the ceremonial groups were together for one final time, the ceremony would reinstate the figures back into the church.

First the figure of Veronica, four girls with flowered headdresses, and the flag girl were positioned at the church door. All were barefoot. A light blue awning was taken to the enramada, where another flag girl was waiting with a red green church flag. The Fariseo captain gave instructions to the girls in Spanish. The flag girl ran from the church to the main cross and waved the flag, the other waved back. She ran back to the church, then halfway between the main cross and the enramada at the three crosses, and on the third time all the way to the enramada. She had a bell on her wrist, which rang with her movement. The same pattern of running was repeated with the figure of Veronica. When the figure was at the church door, a rocket was let off and the flag was waved at the enramada. At the door Veronica was turned in the four directions and lifted up and down. There was music the whole time, but the

Matachinis did not dance. Then a Matachini ran with the figure of St. John, he went all the way up to the enramada on the first go. A rocket was sent off. St. John was also turned in four directions.

Then the Matachinis and their musicians came out and stood to the side. An Angelito, the big Virgin figure, and the figures of Veronica St. John came out from the church, in this order. The Matachinis kneeled. The Cantoras sang and the Matachinis danced. The awning, the flag, and the Pascolas waited at the enramada. The Matachinis danced to the main cross, where they stopped and kneeled once again facing the church. The Cantoras kept singing. This was repeated once more after the main cross. The deer and the Pascolas danced. The small Jesus figure was now placed underneath the awning. The Matachinis turned and passed the big Virgin figure, dancing. The deer group passed on the left. The Virgin was turned and taken into the church. The Fariseos followed in lines as before, the two Chapayeka masks that had been saved were worn facing backwards on the top of the head by their owners. The masks were left at the main cross, facing down, with the respective knives and swords.

The church group sprinkled flowers, tossing them into the air, on the way to the church. The godparents walked next to the Fariseos, some carrying their regalia. The Matachinis danced in the church. The deer group entered the church, but left soon by the side door. A bell was rung three times and the prayers began. The Cantoras sang, the bell was rung several times at intervals. At times the godparents kneeled. The Fariseos received new rosaries from their godparents.

After the singing in the church was over, there was a little konti in the plaza with the little Jesus figure covered by the awning. The groups went in the following order: the Matachinis and their musicians, the deer group, the boys carrying the three poles, the Caballeros, the flag girls, an Angelito, the table for Jesus, the small Jesus figure and awning, the big Virgin figure, Veronica, Rezantes, Cantoras, the Fariseos and godparents lined up. At times the deer passed the Matachinis, turned and danced facing the procession. At the door, flowers were thrown in the four directions, the figures were lifted up and down. Then the Fariseos entered the church to be blessed. They came out, mostly between the lines, and put on their sandals again. At this point, the godparents "returned the Fariseos to their families." People mingled and talked, eating at the stands. The Caballero swords and flag were at the enramada. By noon almost all had left, only a few leaves and petals were left at the church plaza.

## Chapter 5

### The Ritual as a Conventional Trope

In this chapter I will focus on the conventional forms of the Yaqui Easter ritual and show how the ritual is a trope of Yaqui cosmology. Considered as a trope in Wagner's sense, Easter is not seen as a collection of glossable signs that can be assigned meanings and analysed individually, but an ordered sequence of images, their relations and transformations. The Chapayekas have a very specific role in the ritual in both the conventional aspect of their performance and in the way they combine convention and invention in their performance. The conventional aspect of their performance provides a dialectical opposite to Jesus in the cycles of death and rebirth. The Yaqui Easter is a trope not only of a cycle of death and rebirth for Jesus, but also for the Chapayekas. The (re)birth of one means the eventual death of the other. This creates a perpetual cycle of alternating powers. It is a common pattern for Yaqui ritual to take the form of opposed groups or figures, such as the Pascolas and the deer in the deer dance, or the blue and the red in the celebration of the town's patron saint. The opposed sides represent different powers and principles on one hand, but these powers are also created and strengthened through and in the opposition. In the Easter ritual the main opposition is between the Fariseos and the church group. The Fariseos want to kill Jesus and the church group defends him. This emphasis on opposition is also seen in the more active nature of all characters in comparison to the narrative in the Bible; the Yaqui Pilate, instead of washing his hands, is the one to actually kill Jesus with a lance. Instead of a Judas who quietly goes off and hangs himself in repentance, there are dozens of Chapayekas who hunt for Jesus, led by Pilate. Mary goes looking for her son in the wilderness and has the Mataachines as her army. Jesus runs away from and fights his captors, supported by the church group and ritual kin.

Previous ethnography has overlooked the dialectical nature of the Easter ritual in favor of a more unitary but one-sided interpretation. For example, Edward Spicer has called the Easter ritual "a drama of the triumph of good over evil" and "tragedy of the Chapayekas" (Spicer 1980: 81). The good ones win and the evil ones lose. Although Spicer notes the emphasis given to the Chapayekas, I argue that his interpretation still shows a bias against dialectics in favor of an "articulation of conventionalized contexts into a conscious unity" (Wagner 1981: 116). It is "the articulation of a principle rather than... the dialectical interaction of principles" (ibid. 123).



Yaqui ritual is, however, deeply dialectical in nature. All the action is generated through the interaction of the opposed ceremonial groups, who represent different principles. The ritual as a whole is best understood as the interaction and alternation of these principles rather than emphasizing one over the other, which results in a hierarchy of principles. While it is true that the ritual ends in the triumph of Jesus, and this is the desired outcome, cosmologically the continuity of the eternal cycles of death and rebirth is crucial.

This also helps explain the great stability and continuity of the ritual forms: since each ceremonial group acts and is defined against the other, the groups keep each other strong and focused. Exactly the same can be said of Yaqui ritual as Wagner says about the *Habu* ritual of the Daribi: that it

“is not “enacted” from a “program”... so much as it is internally motivated through the competitive energies of the teams of performers. The tensions that are maintained... correspond to the elemental oppositions of the *Habu* itself. Understood in its own terms, the ritual is self-motivated.” (Wagner 1986: 72).

What, then, are the elemental oppositions present in the Yaqui Easter and how are they expressed?

### **Ritual images**

Wagner argues that

“it is images, in their transformational sequence, that are held consensually in the culture, rather than signs, or sign-based glosses of the images. The range of potential analogies or glosses (interpretations, what it might mean) evoked by a verbal image or trope... is indefinite, possibly infinite. The only certainty and the only concreteness lie in dealing with the images themselves.” (Wagner 1992: 207).

The Yaqui Easter ritual is a metaphorical frame for the metaphorical extensions of different cosmological powers and principles. This way, the Easter ritual mediates between the conventions of Yaqui culture and the larger world of phenomena, including both cosmological and earthly powers. The Yaqui Easter ritual can be seen as a sensible macrocosm of abstract cosmological principles, but it is also a coded symbolic microcosm of powers that exist in the larger macrocosm. This way the ritual is not only a way to create and represent those powers, but also to experience them. The Yaquis themselves, as *yoeme* and as Yaquis, are created as a part of and placed in their

cosmology by these reversible figure-ground dialectics. Macrocosmic agency or power is present in the Yaqui Christian cosmology in the form of Christian deities and other beings (such as foreigners, or the devil, also mediated by the Pascola clowns in the deer dance) and natural species (the deer, the animals represented in the Chapayekas masks). In the microcosm of the ritual, these are represented by two ceremonial groups, the Fariseos (including the Chapayekas) and the church group. The dialectic interaction of these groups mediates the relation of the Yaquis to the powers and beings of the macrocosm.

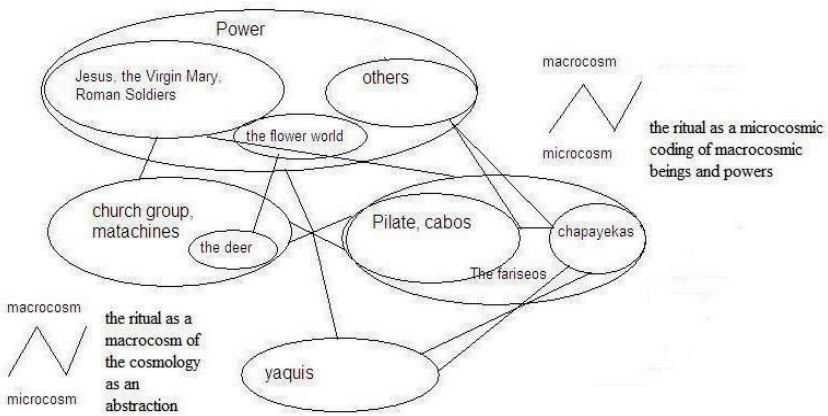


Figure 6. Yaqui cosmology as dialectics of microcosm and macrocosm.

A trope is meaningful through relativity and analogy. It is not enough, then, to interpret tropes as separate metaphors, or to break them down into smaller tropes, but to see how tropes are formed against each other, and how the principle of trope organizes meaning on different levels. "A metaphor, and, by extension, a trope generally, equates one conventional point of reference with another, or substitutes one for another" (ibid. 7). What Wagner calls holography helps in the reading of the trope: "the holography of the part and whole [is] the closure of the constituents to form a trope or metaphor in a larger frame of cultural significance." The parts and the whole reflect each other and each can be used to interpret the other.

"If we can construct the ritual as a whole as a trope, then the contextual interrelationships among its components – its constituent tropes – will be relations of parts of a trope to the whole, and we will

have parsed the trope... The whole is... the condensation... of the constituents, and condensation becomes... the order of cultural construction." Condensation, "a richness of potentially elicited analogies," no longer presents a problem of analogy flowing every which way, but is informed and organized by the relativity of meaning. (ibid. 29, 30).

The Yaqui Easter ritual is meaningful as a whole, then, through its internal relations and the points of reference it creates, but also through its relation to external points of reference, such as the gospel in the Bible, or the figures represented in Chapayeka masks. In any case, it is the relations between the points that create meaning, not individual or independent points considered as signs. The extensions and transformations of tropes can be illustrated through the process of obviation, which shows the motivations and movements of tropes being formed against each other.

### **Obviation – meaning as a process**

"The holography that retains the properties of trope throughout [its] expansion is best exemplified through the recursive processual form... called *obviation*. Obviation is manifested as a series of substitutive metaphors that constitute the plot of a myth (or the form of a ritual), in a dialectical movement that closes when it returns to its beginning point. A myth, then, is an expansion of trope, and obviation, as process, is paradoxical because the meanings elicited in its successive tropes are realized only in the process of their exhaustion, and exhausted in that of their realization." (ibid. xi, emphasis in the original).

Wagner says that the dictionary definition of obviation is "to anticipate and dispose of." He says that symbols are not "a set of legos" to construct meaning, and that tropes are not symbols being built but rather symbols being disposed of and falling apart. (Macfarlane 2008). Obviation "makes room" for new symbols and tropes, something which is clearly observed in ritual as the substitution of a metaphor by another. Paradoxically, the previous metaphor was necessary to reach the following one, but is rendered unnecessary by the new metaphor.

The second meaning of "obviation" is to render "its constructions progressively more *obvious* as their cumulative mediations of the dialectic become increasingly relative." (Wagner 1986: 39-40, emphasis in the original). The process of a trope being obviated is thus also a sequence of revelations, a

"knowledge process" (ibid. 10). The points of obviation, as mediations, are also points of dialectical reversal. They are changes in perception, as well as changes in the perceived. (ibid. 33, 41). "It is not simply a mediation of oppositions that constitutes the ritual, but rather a reciprocal mediative movement among concrete images, each of which condenses a range of oppositional potentials..." (Wagner 1992: 209).

In the sequence of the Easter ritual, these obviation and reversals are also the mutual motivation and creation of the different ceremonial groups. "Obviation is carried forth by the analogic flow it elicits, not by the needs of or interests of individuals or collectivities, or by bio- or socioenergetics..." (Wagner 1986: 69). The trope of Jesus is formed against the trope of the Chapayekas, and vice versa, and the obviation sequence alternates between these poles until the dialectic is exhausted, the images obviated, and the ritual at its end, which in turn sets up the next year's cycle. The cycles follow from each other and the flow never ends. There is no final resolution in the Yaqui ritual, and no need for one. The main thing is to keep the auspicious flow going.

This dialectical tension between two flows or points of reference may stop existing or become diluted due to relativization. This means that the controlling context takes on the characteristics of the controlled, motivating context and vice versa. "Contexts that are continually articulated together tend to permeate one another and thus relativize one another." (Wagner 1981: 58). Highly relativized controls lead to the invalidation of the action, as it aligns the control with the resistance (ibid. 55). In this sense relativization threatens the foundations of meaning as it threatens to obliterate dialectics. Relativization is also the equivalence of two kinds of flows, which have come to model each other so that the distinction seems arbitrary (Wagner 1986: 46). "[T]he flow of analogy is compromised by its own enabling condition of reversibility..." The flow may become reversed, which may result in an auspicious flow becoming inauspicious. However, relativization can also be part of the motivation of a trope, something to resist (ibid. 56). In this sense in the Easter ritual the threat of relativization is the Fariseos, as a kind of flow, trying to take over. This motivates the church group.

The obviation sequence can be modeled to illustrate the internal relations of the trope and its constituent parts. The obviation model is "...a sequence of dialectical closures (thesis-antithesis-synthesis), the concluding term of each (synthesis) forming the initial term (thesis) of the next." Within the counterclockwise movement is another one, formed in reciprocal clockwise

motion by “the retroactive implications of the synthesizing closures.” (Wagner 1992: 210).

The obviation sequence that Wagner poses has seven phases, from A to G. The images of movement proceed from pole to pole until a point of dialectical contradiction is reached, “the original point becomes a part of a paradox, the axis of cancellation cancels itself.” Then the next sequence encompasses the previous. It “includes the previous synthesis in its mediation, and resolves that mediation with a new synthesis...” (Wagner 1986: 54). G is the synthetic closure that realizes the resolution of the sequence (ibid. 49). G is ambivalent, while it is the ultimate limit where relativization has exhausted its limits, it supplants the beginning point, and also facilitates the continuity of the cycle. As it is not the same as either A or D, G is a double cancellation, a paradox. (ibid. 53.) All the points are relative to each other. B-D-F forms one pole of the dialectic, ACE the other pole, which forms a retroactive triangle within the BDF. This is the counterinvention, the motivation. (ibid. 55).

### The obviation model of the Yaqui Easter

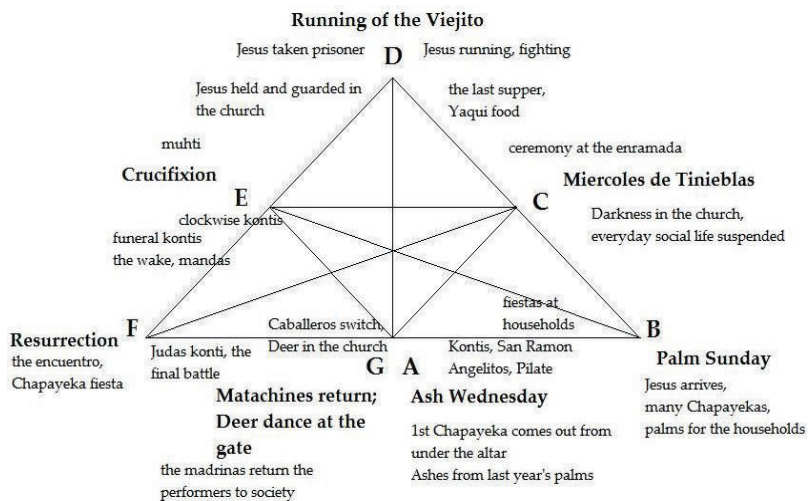


Figure 7. An obviation diagram of the Yaqui Easter ritual

When the Yaqui Easter ritual is presented as a single diagram that marks the crucial moments of the ritual, a back and forth movement becomes evident. The different ceremonial groups, the church group and the Fariseos

take turns initiating action. The **A** to **G** points of obviation follow the major events of the ritual as they happen in order, as described in the previous chapter. Interesting things come out when the points are placed in relation.

The Easter ritual begins on Ash Wednesday (**A**). People have their foreheads marked with crosses made from the ashes of last year's palm leaves. The first Chapayeka (with a traditional type mask) appears from under the altar. The events are set off by the Fariseos. The first konti procession around the way of the cross, takes place on the next Friday. At the beginning point, Jesus is wandering around Yaqui land, curing people. This is represented by the first kontis. In the following weeks, more Chapayekas appear, Angelitos join the church group, the Fariseos grow stronger and start catching up to Jesus. Pilate joins the Fariseos. During the fiesta of San Ramon, the ritual is extended to households, and there are fiestas at households, that represent giving Jesus a place to stay. The Fariseos march to other Yaqui communities carrying the figure of San Ramon. The entire Yaqui land is the site of ritual.

On Palm Sunday (**B**), holy palm leaves are given to everyone. Palm crosses are made for the households. The other performers take off their regalia and go get their leaves, and Fariseos put leaves on the Chapayekas, who (still wearing their masks) resist. There is a small procession in the plaza with all the ceremonial groups, as Jesus is represented as entering Jerusalem at the church. **B** is the substitution or cancellation of **A**, as Jesus now enters the community, and the ritual activity is concentrated in the church. The Fariseos are catching up. The ashes of **A** are substituted by palm leaves (which will eventually become next year's ashes), which embody the power of Jesus, as shown by the Chapayekas' reactions.

Miercoles de Tinieblas (**C**) – the Fariseos have reached the center, the Chapayekas enter to search at the altar, candles at the altar are extinguished one by one until the church is completely dark, the Chapayekas kneel, take off their masks and are whipped by their ritual kin. From this day on, the performers stay at their headquarters at the church and normal social life is suspended. **C** cancels **B**, the arrival of Jesus, as the Fariseos reach the center and the church is plunged into darkness. At **C**, all the ritual groups stay to sleep and eat at the church, kinship is replaced with ritual kinship as the *madrinas* (godmothers) cook for the performers. **ABC** creates a thesis – antithesis – synthesis – sequence in that first Jesus is wandering, chased by the Fariseos. The antithesis to this is that Jesus arrives in the community/Jerusalem, the direction is turned and the action is brought to the center, and the Fariseos are dominated by the palm leaves. In a synthesis of the first two, the pursuit of Jesus by the Fariseos is made concrete in that they now

reach the center: the Chapayekas come right up to the altar, and the church is plunged into darkness.

**C** is also the beginning point of the next sequence. The Fariseos have reached the center, but Jesus is still free. In the next phase, the running of the Viejito (**D**), Jesus is taken prisoner by the Fariseos. First is the Last Supper. The Fariseos find and catch Jesus, who breaks away and runs around the konti, the Fariseos in pursuit. There is fighting, Jesus is defended by his godparents. Finally Jesus is held and guarded in the church by the Chapayekas. **D** cancels **C** as Jesus is now in the hands of the Fariseos. The next phase is the crucifixion (**E**); Jesus is killed by the Fariseos. After the crucifixion, the Fariseos go around the konti in a clockwise direction, which is the opposite of the usual. There are several funeral kontis with the body of Jesus. There is a wake in the church. This is a very liminal moment within the ritual, as although Jesus is dead and the Fariseos are at the height of their power, this is a time for people to perform individual mandas, and people with illness or other problems may enter the church and pray for help. **E** cancels **D**, as it takes Jesus from live prisoner to dead god. In the **CDE** sequence the thesis is that the Fariseos have reached the center, but do not have Jesus yet. The antithesis of this they take Jesus as prisoner, and in a synthesis of controlling both the church as a center and Jesus the god, they kill him.

The next sequence is **EFG**. At the beginning, Jesus is dead. The next phase (**F**) marks a reversal as Jesus is resurrected, represented by the encuentro and the Chapayeka fiesta. The encuentro represents the meeting of Veronica and St. John, Veronica tells the news of the empty tomb. Two groups march in opposite directions from the church around the konti, when they meet, fireworks are set off and the groups run a race back to the church. This is followed by the Chapayeka fiesta. The Chapayekas are still guarding the funeral bier in the church, but they start having a party and do not notice that the body of Jesus is no longer in the bier. After the resurrection comes the final battle, but the actions of the Fariseos anticipate defeat. On Saturday morning, the madrinas take the Chapayekas out to breakfast. There is the Judas konti with the Judas effigy that will be burned with the Chapayeka masks. In the Gloria, there is the final battle in the church, where the Fariseos are defeated by the flowers thrown by the church group and the dancing of the deer dancer and the Pascolas. At this point, the Caballeros, who started out siding with the Fariseos, switch over to the church group side. This final sequence ends in the little Gloria (**G**) when the Fariseos are gone, two masks are all that remain of the Chapayekas, Jesus is reinstated in the church, and the Matachines have returned as the group that holds the ritual power. The **EFG** sequence is quite

clear: the beginning thesis is that Jesus is dead. The resurrection is the antithesis, and the synthesis of the death and rebirth of the god is that all are reinstated in their places and the relations between the groups and the powers they represent are organized. In this sense, the final sequence is a kind of distillation of the entire trope, holographic in Wagner's sense (ibid. 51-52).

When the obviation points are put into relation with each other, the diagram shows how the church group and the Fariseos motivate each other. The points of **ACE** are moments of the Fariseos becoming active, taking over, or initiating an action. At **A**, the first Chapayeka appears, and the hunt for Jesus begins. **C** marks the miercoles de tinieblas, when the church is darkened. **E** is the crucifixion. **ACE** forms the inner motivating triangle. **BDF** is the corresponding pole of the church group and Jesus being the active force. On Palm Sunday (**B**), Jesus enters the community, and powerful Palm leaves are passed around. At **D**, when the Fariseos first capture Jesus, he breaks away and there is a fight, ritual kin and the church group joining in defending Jesus. As there is the Last Supper and then resistance and battle, **D** is also a somewhat ambivalent moment. This seems appropriate as it is set opposite to **A** and **G**, the end/beginning of the entire cycle. At **F** Jesus is resurrected, which leads to the final battle.

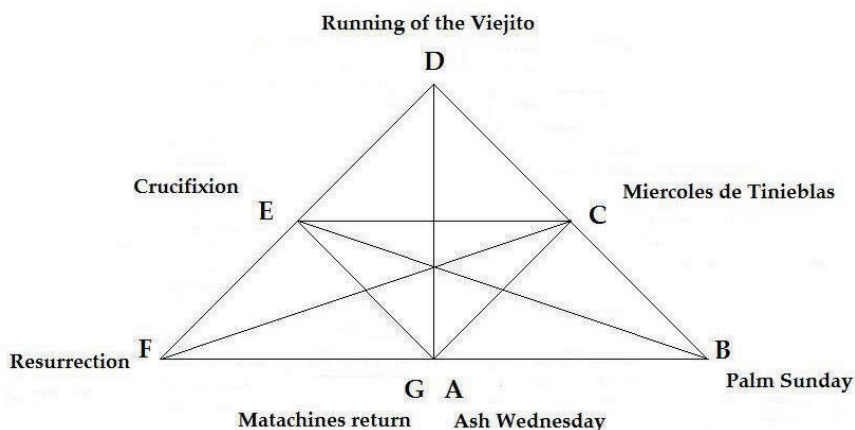


Figure 8. Oppositions within the ritual.

There are relations of opposition, but also anticipation, between the points of the two triangles **ACE** and **BDF**. The beginning and end of the cycle, the appearance of the first Chapayeka on Ash Wednesday (**A**) and the end (**G**), where everything is back to normal, is related to the running of the Viejito (**D**).



The first Chapayeka is born from the altar, he is alone and weak. His power will grow, and at the running of the Viejito, the Chapayekas are strong and chasing after Jesus to take him prisoner. However, the Last Supper seems to indicate that Jesus is anticipating the events to come and the running of the Viejito is also a clash between the Fariseos and the church group. Palm Sunday (B) and the crucifixion (E) and Miercoles de tinieblas (C) and the resurrection (F) also have a relation of anticipation and opposition. Jesus is still powerful on Palm Sunday, but it is also the moment he enters the community, comes within the influence of the Fariseos, and at the crucifixion he is killed by them. At miercoles de tinieblas the Chapayekas have reached the altar and the church is darkened. This is in opposition to the resurrection. After the darkness, however, the church is lit again, there is new light. The resurrection is also the resurrection of hope and light.

### **The image cycles of the Chapayekas and Jesus**

The Easter ritual is extremely condensed and each of the different parts or metonyms of the ritual have their own obviation sequences. Most important, however, is the relation between the Fariseos and Jesus. When the Easter ritual is divided into two consecutive obviation sequences shown in figures 9 and 10, the inverse cycles of Jesus and the Chapayekas become clear. The first sequence begins with the rebirth of the Chapayeka (A1) and ends in Jesus being dead (G1). The second sequence begins with the rebirth of Jesus (A2) and ends in the Chapayekas being destroyed (G2). In each sequence the act of killing, the moment of sacrifice happens at F and G is the state where the one side is in power and the other is rendered inactive.

The respective points of each sequence inversely mirror each other. This is reflected also in that the events that took place inside the church or in a fixed place, such as the Last Supper enramada, in the first sequence take place out in the konti in the second sequence and vice versa. On Palm Sunday (B1), the Chapayekas are dominated by the Fariseo officers and the power in the palm leaves. They try to run when the other Fariseos tuck the leaves into the Chapayekas' belts or pockets, but are forced to accept the leaves. During the Chapayeka fiesta (B2) the Chapayekas are completely out of control, drunk and dancing, first in the church, then all over the plaza. On Miercoles de tinieblas (C1), the Chapayekas are whipped by their madrinas. In the second sequence, the Chapayekas are again with their madrinas; at this point the madrinas take them away from the church to have breakfast (C2). This is the only time they are allowed to leave the ritual area on other than Chapayeka duties connected to the ritual. In the descriptions from Arizona the

Chapayekas leaving for breakfast is not mentioned, but there is a konti to “wake up” the crosses that have been knocked down at the crucifixion (Painter 1986: 470). The madrinas take the performers to breakfast as preparation to bring them back to society and the Chapayekas perform the Judas konti as preparation for going away. The Last Supper (**D1**) is Jesus’s preparation for death and sacrifice and the Judas konti (**D2**) is the same for the Chapayekas. The Chapayekas also say goodbye to Judas and pay their respects to him. The running of the Viejito (**E1**) is a clash and battle between the Fariseos and the church out in the konti, while the Gloria (**E2**) marks the final battle that takes place inside the church. The crucifixion (**F1**) is echoed by the Judas pyre (**F2**) where Judas is burned in effigy together with the Chapayeka masks and paraphernalia. In both sequences **G** is a paradoxical moment of inaction and death that will become a rebirth at the beginning of the next cycle. When the first Chapayeka comes out he is weak and helpless, Jesus is considered to be reborn as a baby, who will grow to adulthood over the course of the year. The final **G** reinstates the order until the next Easter.

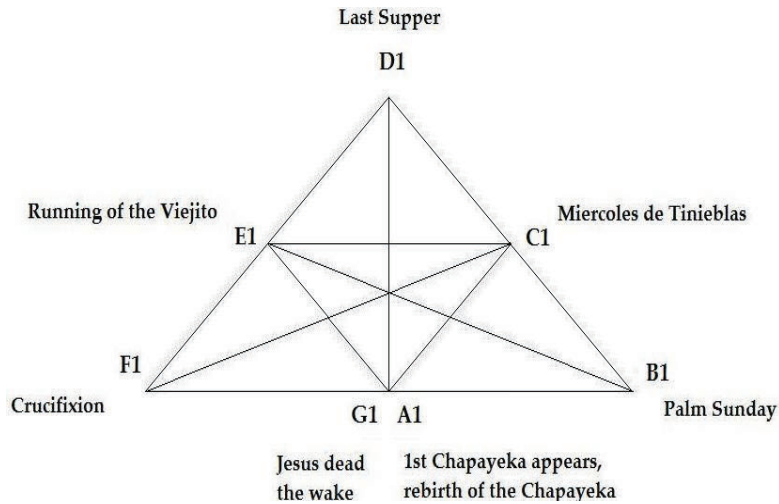


Figure 9. The first obvation sequence: the rebirth of the Chapayeka ending in the death of Jesus

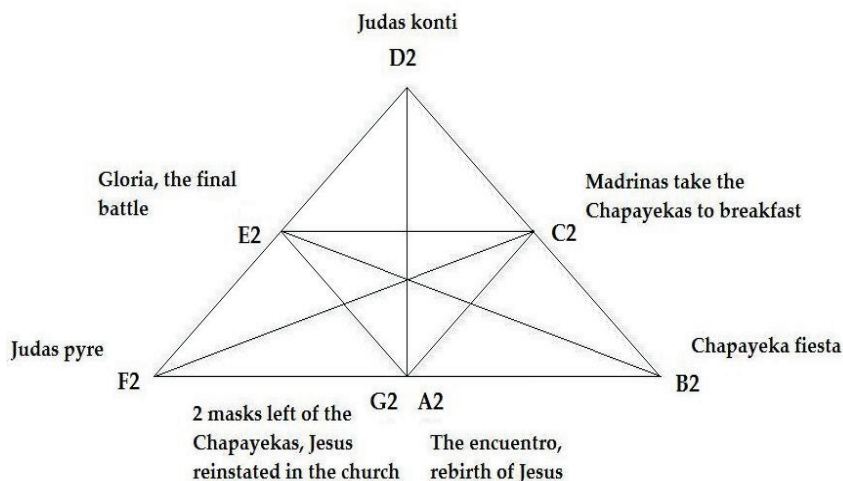


Figure 10. The second obviation sequence: the rebirth of Jesus ending in the death of the Chapayeka

First there is one very weak Chapayeka, who appears from the altar, then there are two, gradually more, they grow in numbers and strength, they come closer to Jesus and finally take hold of him. Then the Chapayekas have a triumphant fiesta, which turns out to be in vain. The Chapayekas – quite cheerily – take the Judas effigy around the konti, put him on the pyre, and pay their respects and say good bye. Finally there is a battle; the Chapayekas little by little lose their ritual gear until there are no Chapayekas. Covered by blankets, the performers are hustled into the church by their godparents to be returned to society. The final image is the burning Judas doll. Jesus in the beginning is wandering around the Yaqui lands curing people, represented by kontis and San Ramon, the fiestas at households. Then he enters the center, represented by a figure of Jesus riding a burro, and the ritual action is focused at the church. Next Jesus is represented by a living man, he has the Last Supper, is taken prisoner but fights back in the running of the Viejito. Nevertheless, he is caught and crucified. The bier containing his body is carried in the funeral kontis and laid out in the church for the wake. After the encuentro the figure is placed back on the huge cross and in the little Gloria, Jesus is represented again by the figure riding a burro, returning to the church.

If the images of the Chapayekas are varied in that there are many of them and they change often, the images of Jesus vary in that he is represented by different figures, and his power is also represented in the deer, the flowers,

and the church. While the rest of the year Jesus is present in the figures in the church and as a power and deity evoked in prayers, during Easter he is active and present.

The Chapayekas emerge from the altar, within the church, they grow to encompass and take over Jesus, the power or center of the church, who in turn is reborn and takes over and encompasses the Fariseos. Finally the Chapayekas are reduced to two masks which are kept in the church until the next Easter. While the rest of the year is controlled or “owned” by the Matachines, during Lent and Easter the Fariseos take control of the community. The different principles, represented by the different ceremonial groups, come into contact and wax and wane in power in symmetrical cycles.

When the ritual is represented as a single diagram, the relations between points of reference within the diagram are dynamic; there is a tension between them – a relation of both opposition and anticipation. For example, the darkness of miercoles de tinieblas is opposed to the resurrection. When the ritual is represented as two diagrams, relations between the different points appear as the outcome, and the earlier metaphors become the preparation for the later ones. Miercoles de tinieblas is now placed in relation to the crucifixion. The substitutions are more like anticipations rendered obvious than cancelled opposites. **ACE** and **BDF** are inverse of each other in both sequences and the inner triangle **ACE** provides the motivation in both.

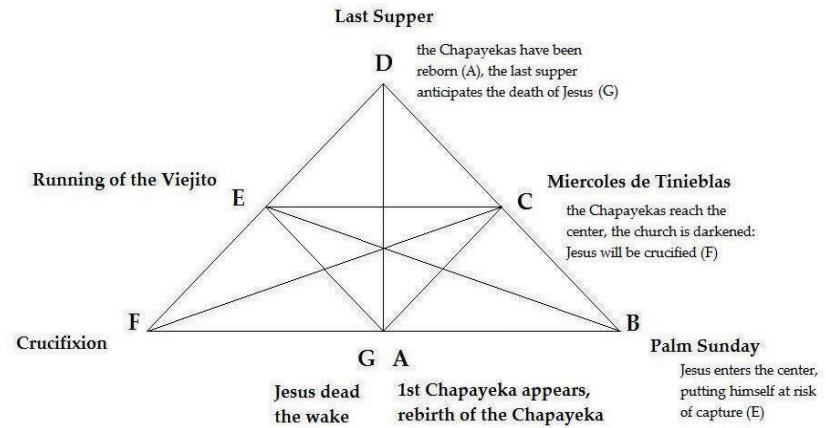


Figure 11. Relations of anticipation in the first obviation sequence.

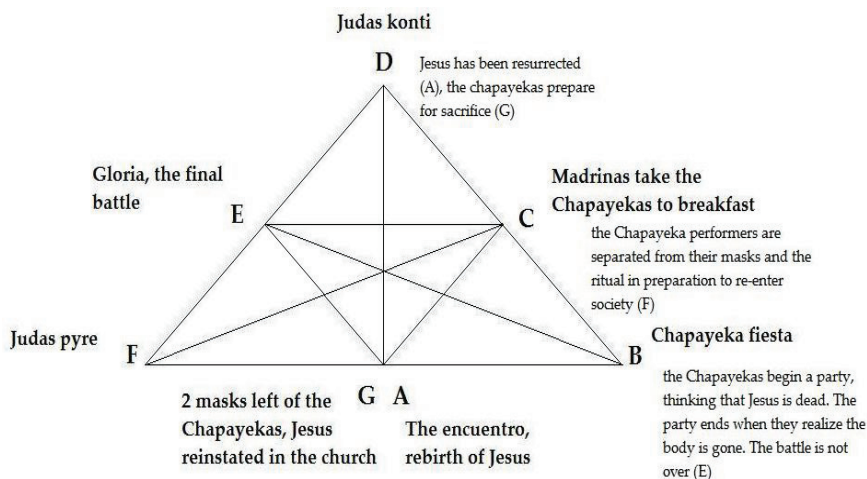


Figure 12. Relations of anticipation in the second obviation sequence.

The second sequence relates the Chapayeka fiesta (B) with the Gloria (E). At the Chapayeka fiesta the Chapayekas are out of control and “drunk,” at the Gloria they are marching as soldiers again. The fiesta, although it is in celebration, is also about how the soldiers did not do their duty when guarding the tomb of Jesus, and in the end the celebration ends when the Chapayekas discover that the body has been replaced by a stuffed animal. So the celebration has no cause, the war is not over, and there will be more battle. Painter says that in Arizona the first Chapayeka guard at the fiesta is teased that it is his fault the Chapayekas’ heads will be cut off at the Gloria (1986: 470).

### The Yaqui version compared to the biblical one

For the sake of analysis, I will compare the Yaqui Easter ritual to the obviation sequence made according to the narrative in the Bible (Matt. 21-28). My analysis of the narrative from the Bible is not meant to represent general or official interpretations in Christianity, but to take one possible point of reference – albeit from a different genre – in order to bring out the distinct features of the Yaqui version more clearly. As I see it, the changes or substitutions in the Bible sequence are focused on the development of Jesus, his outer and inner states and his relation to humans. The point is the correct relation between humans and Jesus. This becomes very clear in the relative

points of obviation in the diagram. **D – A** mediates the relative status of Jesus to humans, as king (**A**), condemned prisoner (**D**), and divine spirit (**G**). **B – E** mediates the sacrifice, the Last Supper (**B**) where Jesus institutes the Eucharist, the taking of bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ, and the death at the cross (**E**). **F – C** is a mediation of divine and human power, where at one end Jesus is taken prisoner (**C**) and at the other overcomes death and is resurrected (**F**). Jesus mediates between divine and human and is finally condensed into the divine pole.

The diagram of the biblical narrative shows a linear story with a resolution. Jesus goes through the transformation from a partly human to a fully divine being. There are oppositions in play; the events progress through the opposition of humans to Jesus, but at the same time, he knows what is happening and goes along with it. This is an example of the dialectics being mediated by convention. There are “two sides,” both are actually working towards the same goal, but this is only known to one side. This also results in a contradiction for humans, they are saved by the sacrifice of Jesus, but they are now also guilty of having killed him.

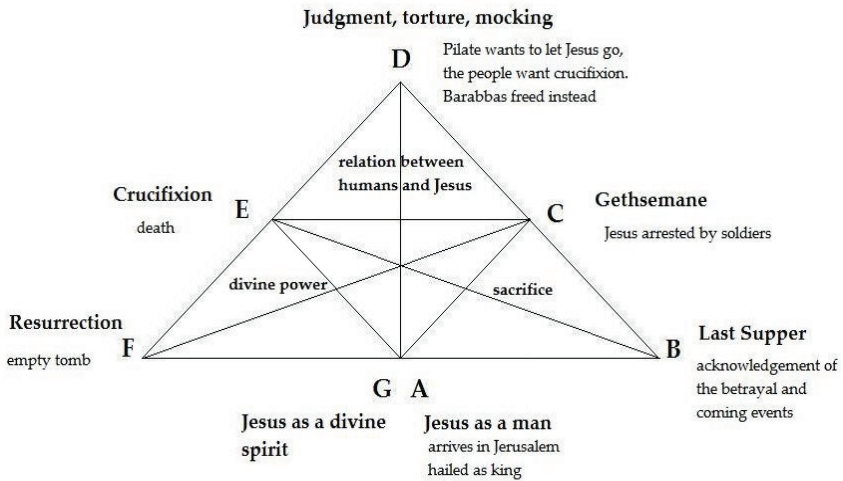


Figure 13. An obviation diagram of the biblical sequence.

The Yaqui version mediates convention dialectically. By expanding the trope into an inverted double sequence of the rebirth and death of the Chapayekas and the death and rebirth of Jesus, the Yaqui version becomes a

dialectic of two principles. While the Yaqui version mostly repeats the events described in the Bible faithfully, there is one significant change. Instead of the judgment and Pilate asking whether Jesus or Barabbas should be freed, there is the running of the Viejito, where the people defend Jesus. In the Yaqui version, the people are not guilty of murdering Jesus. The Fariseos and the Chapayekas do this – in a very determined manner. Instead of condemning him, the people defend Jesus. The people may support Jesus by hosting a fiesta in their home, carrying the figures, or defending Jesus at the running of the Viejito. Yaqui religion emphasizes fulfilling one's duty and performing ritual labor; it is not about guilt.

### **Conclusion: ritual and cosmology**

The Easter ritual is a core trope of the Yaqui cosmology which encompasses all the beings and realms of the Yaqui world.

“By observing [the necessary] precautions and distinctions, [a differentiating] society creates itself sequentially and episodically as a cosmological harmony, producing a manageable power as well as the social institutions and situations in which that power is applied. Such creativity is by nature cyclical.” (Wagner 1981: 122).

Perhaps it might be added that such cyclicity is by nature creative? Looking at Yaqui culture and Yaqui ritual in light of the invention of culture model brings out the dialectical relations within the ritual. In this model change and continuity are no longer problematic, as they are part of the creation and recreation of the ritual as part of a collective orientation. Cosmology is created anew, and the ritual remains a powerful dialectical counterpart to non-ritual life.

The obviation diagrams bring out the relations of the metaphoric points. In the Yaqui model the Chapayeka goes through a symmetrical but inverse sequence to that of Jesus, further demonstrating the dialectical form, and how tropes are formed against each other. The ritual has inverse cycles of death, sacrifice and rebirth. The dialectical logic is present on all levels; on the level of the different ceremonial groups the opposition creates a cosmological dialectic that keeps the ritual cycles going. Looking at the Yaqui Easter as a trope where meaning is elicited in sequences of images, not in glossable signs, makes it much easier to approach the power and meaning of the ritual. The Yaqui Easter is extremely rich in sheer imagery, but looking at the obviation sequences shows the holography, how the parts reflect the whole, which allows the ritual to be perceived as meaningful without necessarily knowing the glosses for the images or even ever witnessing the entire ritual. “Any

number of abstractions could be found in the imagery, all are obviated in its working out." (Wagner 1992: 313).

As a trope the ritual has a logic and power. Set in motion it keeps itself going through the flow of energy. The power must be channeled, the flows brought together and mediated. This is where the clowns come in.



## Chapter 6

### Invention in the Chapayeka Performance

#### **Creativity, invention, and power**

By their conventional action the Chapayekas keep the cycles of sacrifice going, which is necessary for the cosmology. The other side or part of their performance is differentiation, performance created by deliberate invention or improvisation. I have argued that the dynamics of Yaqui culture and the Easter ritual are very dialectical in nature. Within these dialectics, the Chapayekas embody and create more dialectics. A dialectical logic by nature is set up in such a way that it keeps creating more dialectics, and clowns, by nature as well, fit into this very well. The yearly cycle is separated into conventionalizing ritual and differentiating everyday periods, the Yaquis separate themselves into ceremonial groups to create dialectics that mediate convention, and the Chapayeka performers separate themselves between the mask and the performer, into different kinds of Chapayeka types and into two kinds of performance; differentiating and conventionalizing.

The other figures of Yaqui Easter ritual are collectivizing; the focus is always on following a conventional model. Individual quirks or styles are overlooked unless they go so far as to violate the convention and constitute a mistake. The Chapayekas, who in addition to their expected and established conventional performance in the ritual may introduce new characters, objects and actions, alternate between collectivizing and differentiating modes. This alternation entails a figure ground reversal that inverts the contextual relations of the ritual. The observers' focus is shifted accordingly, and even though the spectators may joyfully anticipate, dislike or ignore the Chapayekas' impromptu bits of clowning, they are always recognized as performance, meaningful symbolic action. This shift to differentiation is more likely to happen in certain moments, but as the description of the ritual shows, it may occur at any point.

As a figure the Chapayeka is precipitated through dialectics of convention and invention. This goes for the choosing of the character and making of the mask, as well as performance. First the Chapayekas establish the conventional base of their performance by their clothing, mask, and conventional ways of beginning their performance, the performer turning himself into a Chapayeka. However, once the Chapayekas are "in existence" they begin to differentiate on the common ground of being, firstly, Chapayekas and, secondly, specific kinds of Chapayekas. This is first the making of the

mask and putting together the outfit, and later the act of putting them on, especially and finally the mask. There is first a conventionalizing symbolizing act, but once that is done, the Chapayekas use it as ground for a second level of symbolizing, differentiating *as Chapayekas*. Once this is established, as it must be every time the Chapayeka performer becomes a Chapayeka, the Chapayekas are able to treat the ritual as their established contextual ground and perform differentiating, individual, new and surprising symbolizations. These can take the form of engaging the spectators in interaction or bringing the modern world into the ritual by pretending to talk on a mobile phone while marching in a ritual procession. It is the ability to do figure-ground reversals with the ritual that makes the Chapayekas such powerful figures.

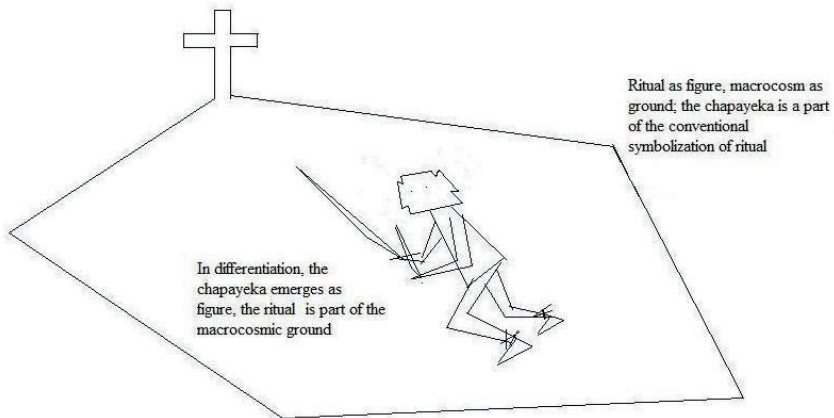


Figure 14. Figure-ground reversal in Chapayeka performance.

The distinction between differentiating and conventionalizing “provides the axis between socializing (collective) and power-compelling (individuating) expressions” (Wagner 1981: xiv). First the ritual is created as a figure. Through conventionalizing symbolization a boundary is drawn around it, and the ritual emerges as a distinct figure on the ground of everyday life. Then the Chapayekas begin to differentiate. They can now create expressions of invention and difference on the basis of the now established convention. Now the Chapayekas become powerful, they are the active ones who try to knock the convention off balance by calling upon and tapping the powers inherent in the beings depicted in their masks. This switching of modes also guards against the relativization of the figure; differentiating allows it to keep

tapping power wherever it may be found and the conventional aspects keep the figure from changing too much, which could mean losing the connection to convention and taking away the Chapayeka's power as a moral figure.

For example, the Chapayeka can interact with people based on the immediate situation, the macrocosmic image. The other performers can only interact within the ritually (conventionally) mediated situation, such as asking someone to take off their hat or putting ashes on someone's forehead. The Chapayekas' improvised interaction with people is an example of a unique symbolization, where image mediates convention. The image is what is foregrounded, and the convention is in the background making the image intelligible. While the other figures are meaningful in relation to the ritual tradition, the Chapayeka is meaningful both in relation to the ritual tradition and in relation to the macrocosm in its widest sense.

The figure-ground reversal entails a shift in relation to context. When the Chapayekas differentiate, the ground is not only the ritual. The ritual as a conventional figure is bounded and set apart from everyday life. In their differentiating aspect the Chapayekas cross the boundary drawn around the ritual, through their masks that represent figures like Popeye or the Pink Panther and their reactions to everything going on around them. By shifting between convention and invention, the clowns create and guard boundaries and then cross them. Not only do they cross boundaries, as figures clowns embody and represent boundaries, and mediate between the things set apart. They bring out the dialectical nature of boundaries as sets of mutually defined opposites. According to Handelman, a boundary can be thought of both as a discontinuity and a paradox, because it is "an amalgam of whatever adjoins it. Then a boundary may be seen as composed of contradictory sets of attributes: top/bottom, known/strange, inclusion/exclusion, and so on." (Handelman 1990: 246-247).

Crossing the boundary and mediating between the ritual and 'the rest of the world' is one of the ways the Chapayekas represent relativization, the blurring of distinctions. Both Yaqui clowns do this, but in different ways. While the Pascola masks and clothing are traditional and fairly unchanging, their verbal performance gives them lots of chance for invention, when they tell stories and joke with the spectators. Because they may speak, they can easily refer to things beyond the ritual. The Chapayekas do this by their masks and possibly objects. The Chapayekas' clowning is limited by not being allowed to speak, which means that the clowning is more tied to that which can be seen or heard. Conventionalizing creates order. By reverting to the

differentiating mode the Chapayekas try to disorganize and create chaos in that order and become powerful as individuals in relation to it.

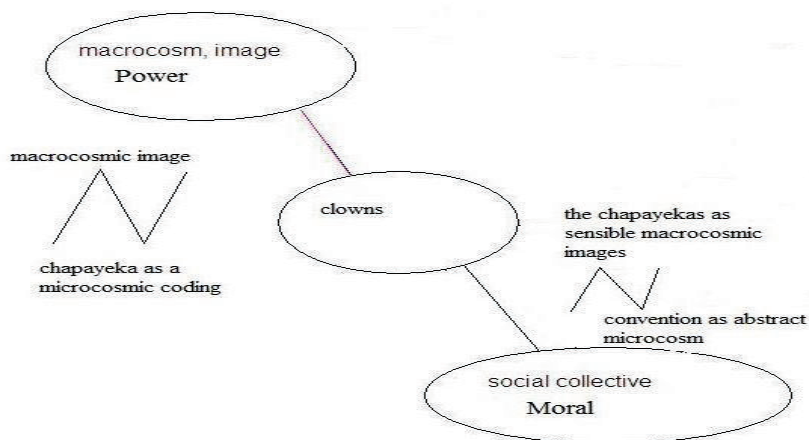


Figure 15. *The Chapayekas as a coded microcosm of powerful others that exist in the macrocosm*

Figure 15 shows how the clowns are able to reverse the dialectics between microcosm and macrocosm. The reversibility of the dialectics means that either image, as individual, differentiated fact, or convention can be obviated, made to serve as the ground for the other.

“The obviation of image, at the macrocosmic pole, resolves itself in the formation of a conventional (or moral) metaphor relating the factual and the collective; the obviation of convention, at the microcosmic pole, resolves itself in the formation of an individuated metaphor relating the factual and the collective.” (Wagner 1986: 31).

As a microcosmic coding of image the Chapayekas can create an individual power tapping symbolization, as macrocosmic images of convention as an abstract microcosm they are social, collective and moral. Convention is obviated in the former, and in the latter image is obviated.

Since there are two modes of symbolization present in the ritual, there are also two very different orientations present. Wagner says that if usually the collectivity is taken for granted and differentiation is considered the realm of human action and agency, the world is seen as populated by agencies, and

species and beings are seen as powers that can be tapped to make oneself powerful in relation to convention. In a conventionalizing mode, the society bonds together in relation to a power, but isn't trying to tap power from it, rather placing itself into relation with it. The conventional side of the Easter ritual, then, would be the Yaquis placing themselves into relation with the deities. This creates order in the cosmos. When the Chapayekas differentiate, they separate themselves from the collective group – of Fariseos, of Yaquis – as powerful individuals. As they are also firmly a part of the conventional through their collectivizing performance, this power elicits a response from the other side, which ultimately keeps the cosmological cycles in movement.

### **Differentiating, conventionalizing, and clowning**

Clowning, the deliberately funny expressions of the Chapayekas, is likely to be part of the differentiating mode of their performance. The funniness often comes from doing something unexpected, changing or elaborating the set actions in some way, or in reactions to other Chapayekas. The set action may become funny through a relatively slight elaboration or variation, for example by doing something very fast or very slow. There is no specific part of the ritual that requires a Chapayeka to clown. Everything could be done “seriously” and this is the way some of the orejonas perform. Some, for example, the animals, mostly act wild and aggressive, and their clowning happens in playing along or reacting to other Chapayekas. Sometimes their clowning comes from actions that would actually be appropriate for the animal, but are wildly funny when performed by a Chapayeka during a ritual, such as the ape hanging placidly from a branch of a tree by one hand with his feet pulled up underneath his body.

Some of the Chapayeka clowning is very short, such as a quick reaction, some are long drawn out affairs with props, where other Chapayekas might join in. For example, “Rambo” had a toy cell phone on which he pretended to be talking during a procession. At one of the stops he sat on the back of a pick-up truck, casually crossing his legs and gesturing towards the procession, all the time “talking” on the phone. Then he pointed to a boy in the crowd, making a sign with his hands to imply the boy was chubby, and nodding as if to say yes, he's here, into the phone. Then he offered the boy the phone, who didn't want to “talk.” Then Rambo pretended to take a picture of the boy with the phone. Actually talking on a phone, let alone taking a photo during a procession, is strictly forbidden and would be stopped by the Chapayekas. The same Chapayeka on another occasion took (by mild force) a bottle of coca-cola from a teenaged Cabo, pretended to drink it, and then staggered around as if

drunk. These are examples of clowning that are more differentiating; the expressions do not have much to do with the situation or the character but are invented as the opportunity presents itself. An example of clowning actions that are more conventional was provided by the sheriff-Chapayeka: during the Last Supper, when the Chapayekas go in pairs to inspect the scene to ascertain it really is Jesus, the sheriff had a wooden walkie talkie, into which he pretended to speak. Then he held it up to the Cantoras singing, as if offering further proof to whoever would be listening to the walkie talkie messages. The sheriff's actions were appropriate to his character, as he took his job very seriously; instead of the disrespectful attitude often shown by the Chapayekas towards the rituals, the sheriff was overly serious and always herding the other Chapayekas and trying to help the Cabos control them. His actions were also more appropriate to the situation at hand. On the other hand, he differentiated by performing in ways that contrast with usual Chapayeka performance.

Painter gives some examples of the Chapayekas clowning with toys and how they would react to the surroundings (Painter 1986: 228, 390). More conventional examples of clowning would be the imitations of the characters, such as those performed by the animals, or imitations of other performers. I saw three Chapayekas, Rambo and two orejonas, imitate a deer dance, one dancing and two sitting and "playing instruments." The one dancing imitated the shuffling dance of the deer, using the movement to kick sand back into the faces of the other two. This is relatively conventionalizing in that it is a part of the traditional repertoire available to the Chapayekas, and relatively differentiating in that it may occur at any point of the ritual or may not occur at all and although it has to be similar enough to the actual deer dance to be recognized as an imitation, the Chapayekas can choose different things from the deer dance to imitate.

There is a lot of variance to the amount of invention in Chapayeka performances; some Chapayekas only conventionalize, while others maximize the differentiation. A Chapayeka must perform the conventional forms of the ritual. If he wishes to also differentiate he has to learn when and how. This is partly governed by the figure represented in the mask, and the choice of mask is partly governed by how the Chapayeka performer wants to perform. Improvisations may occur at any time, but most often they occur at times when the Chapayekas are expected to stand forming lines. The lines remain, but many Chapayekas will wander from their spots to engage onlookers or each other in bits of clowning. Also the Chapayeka relays, when the Chapayekas take places at the stations on the konti and wait for the clapper to come around, are prime opportunities. The bits of clowning may be simple,

consisting of only a few actions, such as poking another Chapayeka in the back and then looking away and pretending to be innocent when he turns around, or complicated and drawn out, such as the staging of a cockfight between two Chapayekas with rooster masks. The Chapayekas may also interrupt or color one of their set actions. For example, on *Miercoles de tinieblas* the Chapayekas go in pairs up to the altar, get down on the ground and crawl around the altar in opposite directions. Two Chapayekas, both wearing circus clown masks, were taking their turn, when one of them stopped to play with a yo-yo. The other one reacted by first making gestures for him to hurry up, tapped his foot in impatience and finally did a facepalm and then drummed his fingers against his forehead in despair. The elf always marched in a very individual way, doing quick chachacha-like shuffles to the side while the others kept a steady 1-2, 1-2-3 rhythm. The Chapayeka fiesta is perhaps the longest instance of Chapayeka clowning. The Chapayekas are expected to “get drunk” and have a fiesta, play music and dance to celebrate the death of Jesus, unaware of the resurrection. This could be done in a relatively conventional way, but also offers a chance for the Chapayekas to clown.

The invention happens according to certain rules. For example, the time and place are limited, and the actions must be done in a Chapayeka manner, without speaking, etc. The inventions are also limited (and inspired) by the figure represented in the mask. The behavior has to be in some way suited to the figure portrayed in the mask. The Chapayeka also has to protect the mask, and protect himself from being touched or even looked at too intensely, for example at moments of putting on or removing the mask. The vulnerability of the Chapayekas limits them much more than any rules as to what they are allowed or forbidden to do. Although the improvised action is subject to certain limits, the Chapayekas do have license to break norms of behavior. Some of this is a representation of breaking the rules, such as pretending to film or take photos. As filming is strictly forbidden, it is not done for real even by the Chapayekas. Some of the transgressions are more real, as when the Chapayekas steal things. Apparently there used to be more of this, Chapayekas would take things they could reach from yards and from spectators, if not stopped by a shout of “*Ave María Purísima!*” and return them in exchange for a small sum of money. (Painter 1986: 228). I saw a Chapayeka steal a can of spray foam from a vendor’s cart, and another take a bottle of coca cola from a Cabo, which he later returned.

The Chapayekas have very clear – albeit somewhat volatile – relations to each other, to other figures in the ritual, and to spectators. Their interactions with others also have conventional and innovative sides. The Chapayekas

interact quite a bit with the spectators. The children sometimes initiate this, adults sometimes call out a joke to the Chapayekas, but most of the interaction is initiated by the Chapayekas, often to the dismay of the target, as they become the center of attention, the Chapayekas are unpredictable and usually mocking, and the person targeted has very little he can do but bear it and wait for the clown to go away. Mostly, however, the Chapayekas interact with each other, and this is how the most spectacular clowning events are created. Especially with those of the same mask type, or otherwise appropriate figures (e.g. The Mexican and the horse) interact with each other. When they are standing in lines, waiting, they may 'talk' to each other in sign language, they will point out things to each other and carry on conversations. The Chapayekas also make trouble and look for ways to bother each other. The circus clowns, for example, were constantly making friends and enemies out of each other, aiding and thwarting each other.

The Chapayekas also try to get spectators involved in interactions between the Chapayekas. For example, a circus clown squirted water from a small bottle onto the foot of the elf. When the elf turned to look, the clown pointed at a small boy standing by and mimed wiping his nose and throwing snot. The boy protested that he hadn't done it, the clown all the time nodding and pointing at the boy. The elf pointed at the boy and looked questioningly at the clown. After he got the confirmation, he turned towards the boy, very slowly and menacingly. Everybody held their breath, waiting to see how the elf would punish the boy. After a long tense pause the elf wagged his finger reproachingly at the boy and tapped his head with his finger. "Think!" The Chapayekas are masters at building up expectations and then upstaging those expectations.

In 2006 there were two roosters among the Chapayekas. These animals are common in Sonora, and cockfights are popular. The two roosters, as is characteristic of the animals, would try to attack each other every time they came within sight. For example, when the marching lines of Fariseos passed each other in the church, the roosters would make small lunges at each other in passing. When they started to fight in line, the other Chapayekas would quickly join in and set up a cockfight, someone playing the part of the owner, holding the rooster, stroking his back and then giving him a shove towards the other to send them to fight, the other Chapayekas gathered round in a circle like gamblers.

As these examples show, there is not always a clear divide between invention and convention. Invention and convention are not two classes for two kinds of tropes. The dialectic between the poles of convention and



individuating facts create a range, within which expressions are relatively differentiating and conventionalizing (Wagner 1986: 25). For example, a Chapayeka has to march in line with the others, but he may do this in his own style and change or add things. Conversely, some “improvisations” may be repeated or become routinized. The difference to set parts is, of course, that they may or may not be repeated in future performances without affecting the conventional trope of Easter discussed in the previous chapter. It is conventional for a Chapayeka with an animal mask to behave like that animal, and it is conventional for the roosters to be aggressive towards each other, but when several Chapayekas work together to stage a cock fight, this is relatively differentiating. Improvisation shifts the focus of the performer away from the conventional model to the opportunities given in the moment, and it is the new, different and individual aspects that the spectator also focuses his attention on. At the same time, improvisation happens on a conventional base, which provides meanings that are extended or related in new ways by invention.

### **Microcosm and macrocosm in a differentiating society**

In their conventionalizing aspect the Chapayekas are an important part of relating the Yaquis to the Christian deities, as Judas, Roman soldiers, and as a kind of anti-Jesus. They are the other pole of the dialectic that keeps the cosmological cycles going. In their differentiating aspect they tap the power inherent in the universe through the figures they represent.

Wagner says that humans always make a separation between what is the realm of human agency and action and the given circumstances that resist, motivate and contextualize action (MacFarlane 2008). The Western idea of nature versus culture is an example of a cultural articulation of this separation. The distinction is an important part of understanding and acting in the world, and is repeated in different contexts. This distinction may be conceptualized as God and nature, or humans and the natural world or the individual as an agent and an inner human nature that is conceived of as an individual personality. In this kind of conventionalizing society, conscious agency is separated from nature. I argue that this is not the case in Yaqui culture. In a differentiating society, where the conventional and moral are part of the world within which humans act to differentiate themselves, it makes sense to see agency and conscious power in the macrocosm. It is “a world of immanent humanity.” (Wagner 1981: 86)

This can also be seen in how different phenomena and species are associated with different beings that personify and control them. The Yaqui

myth of the Talking Tree, the deer dance, and becoming a deer dance performer are examples of power in the monte and how that power is essentialized and embodied in certain places and beings. According to Wagner, in differentiating societies, species and phenomena of the world are seen as powers, which can be tapped for personal enhancement. Conversely, these powers also pose a threat of communal doom. "The lives of people and communities in these traditions are seen as a continual interaction with such powers... there must be some human mastery of these forces." (ibid. 100).

This would also explain the logic of Chapayekas, and their portrayal of different beings of power. In ritual the Yaquis separate themselves into different ceremonial groups to create a dialectic that mediates the relation of the community to the deities and powers in the macrocosm. The Chapayekas are, on one hand, enhancing their own power as they portray different species and powerful beings in the world and on the other hand they bring that power into the service of the Fariseos against the church and Jesus. The powers and spirits, as well as the foreign beings also represented by the Chapayekas, embody in their macrocosmic state a threat of relativization, in the sense of not being human, not being Yaqui, not being moral. Uncontrolled, these beings might bring the Yaquis into such a state too. However, "someone can – and must – bring [these powers] under control and effect a moral rather than catastrophic representation of them. Powers or forces or spirits, are masks the forms in which relativization is experienced, apprehended and exorcized" (ibid. 99).

This is accomplished by the Chapayeka performance. The relativizing forces are given a moral expression as part of the cosmological cycles. As it is ultimately ritual action that guards against the relativization of the Yaquis and their cosmology, the clowns are extremely important as they are the ones to revitalize the ritual and keep it from becoming relativized through these very representations of relativization.

The Chapayekas are tropes on several different levels. These tropes function in different ways. Firstly, they are tropes as a conventional part of the ritual; the different figures they represent are tropes and finally there are the improvised tropes in the ritual. In these, the relations that the tropes set up and impinge upon are not only those within the ritual, or within Yaqui culture, but expand to cover relations of Yaquis to Others such as Yaqui to non-Yaqui, or human to non-human. In a similar way the deer dance involves the Pascolas as the sons of the devil and the deer as a power of yoania and seania and creates cosmological metaphors of the Yaquis' relations to beings and powers of the

monte. The Easter ritual does this also with the Christian deities and beings and phenomena of the modern world.

If the conventionalizing of the ritual works to set up and reinforce the conventions of culture and cosmology, the ritual is conventional, moral, ordered, and set apart from the rest of the world; a world of difference, change and disorder is counterinvented by the need for such order. In the Chapayekas' figure-ground reversing differentiation, the ritual and convention is counterinvented as the motivating context within which the individual, unique, and differentiating actions of the clowns sets them apart in their efforts to be powerful. The ritual may be conventionally created as bounded and apart, but this is by the means of a specific conventionalizing symbolization. The ritual stays bounded only as long as the effects of the symbolic expressions that created that boundedness last. After stints of differentiation, the Chapayekas revert back to conventionalizing and reinforce the conventional again. There are no permanent oppositions; they have to be recreated over and over again. Meaning is made possible as it is "rescued" from complete relativity by convention. The conventional forms serve as ostensibly absolute frames for less conventional expressions. "Lesser figures are formed within and against the larger, framing ones, and eventually become encapsulated by them, only to facilitate the formation of yet other, lesser expressions." (Wagner 1986: 9)

This is seen in the Chapayeka performance in the sense that the ritual in general provides a conventional frame for the differentiating actions, but also in the improvised clowning, where the Chapayekas evoke other conventional frames or points of reference to set up their tropes, or make use of the tropes created by other Chapayekas to form new ones. The ritual performance of a given year is taken in the context of the ritual tradition. At the same time, these performances also become a part of the tradition. All Chapayekas must begin by establishing the conventional, and the first Chapayeka to appear, that in the ritual process establishes the Chapayeka as a figure and thus is the first to recreate the convention, must be an orejona. This sets up the traditional, most conventional Chapayeka type as the basic convention. When new types are introduced, some will appear only for the three mandatory years, others, such as the circus clown, become a new, conventional, type, which then serves as a frame for the new circus clown masks.

### **Otherness as power**

The otherness or strangeness of the Chapayeka is perhaps their most striking feature. Just how obvious and salient the otherness is was made very

clear one day after the angelitos had arrived at the church. The Chapayekas had attacked them as usual, and the godmothers of the angels had chased the Chapayekas away by shouting "Ave Maria Purísima" at them. A group of young boys, around 10 years old, started shouting the same phrase at me and stomping their foot as the godmother had done, indicating that I was just as other, strange, and out of place as the Chapayekas. A trope had been motivated by another.

The Chapayekas mediate the boundary of otherness in a similar way as the one that separates the ritual from the rest of the world. They embody the boundary in their figure in a way that seems to blur the distinction, but they also reinforce the boundary and guard against the relativization of the opposed poles. In a conventional sense, the Chapayekas represent otherness as defined by various non-Yaqui, perhaps not quite human, beings, but when the mode of symbolization is inverted, and the Chapayekas turn to invention, the different Chapayeka figures are most importantly a means of tapping powers inherent in the universe.

The conventionalizing mode orders the world and categorizes different beings. In the differentiating mode an individual can seek out power and become powerful in relation to the convention, including other people, through action. Through figures like Chucky or Shrek, or the president of the United States, the power of otherness is tapped into and put into the service of Yaqui ritual. To remain powerful, the Chapayekas have to remain other. They remain other by constantly alternating between the modes of performance and by introducing new figures.

Schechner has argued that the performance cycle of the Chapayekas is about the Yaquis becoming civilized, that the dramatic cycle of the Chapayekas explores the problem of how to be both Yaqui and Catholic at the same time (Schechner 1997: 169-175). I disagree with this. Instead of asking, "who are we?" the question that the Chapayekas answer seems to be who are they, who are not us? If the relation between the mask and the wearer is paradigmatic of the relation between self and other (Emigh 1996: xvii), the Chapayekas are not about how to be both self and other, but how to mediate between self and other in a way that keeps the boundary intact. The relation between the Chapayeka performers and their masks makes this clear in a very concrete way. The Chapayeka masks are very powerful, and performance with the masks is necessary for the ritual. At the same time, the distinction between the man and the mask must be retained. This is done in various ways: there is a cross on the inside of the mask. While wearing the mask, the performer must keep the cross of his rosary in his mouth, not talk, and keep praying in his

mind. If the performer breaks this or other rules for treatment of the mask, he may find himself unable to take it off; the mask becomes stuck to his face in a very literal example of relativization. The Chapayeka masks are conduits of a certain kind of flow, which may under certain circumstances contaminate, hurt and even kill the performer, who must keep himself separate from this influence. If the performer does something wrong, the mask may stick to his face or cut him, he may become possessed or become a ghost. At the same time, there is no effort to destroy or get rid of this power. The idea is to channel it, to give a moral representation of it. If properly controlled, the flows will keep the obviation going. Then the mask will help the performer and fulfill its potential as a source of blessings.

All the Chapayeka figures are male and powerful. Some are funny, like the chavo, some are evil, like Chucky, the devil or the vampire. Others are basically benevolent, but strong and powerful, like Popeye or the deer dancer. I think these general features and otherness are more important than the details of the individual characters. The otherness of the Chapayeka is important as a means to power.

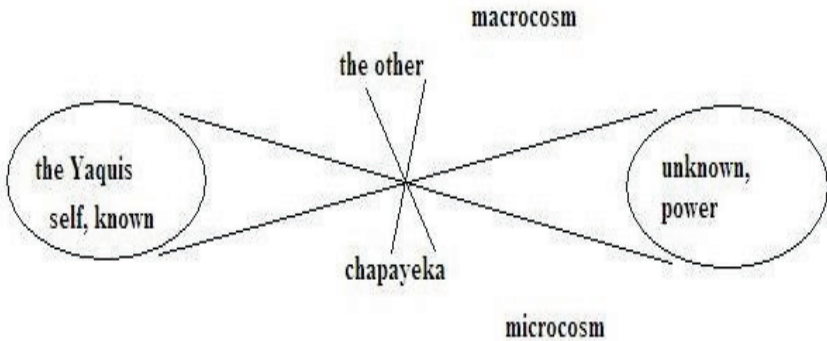


Figure 16. *Chapayekas as mediators of otherness*

The unknown and the other can only be imagined or even perceived through the known and the self. This way the unknown is all the time becoming the known as it is perceived and expressed. The Other is a kind of macrocosmic image of the unknown. At the same time, paradoxically, as it is recognized as something, a specific kind of other, or made into a Chapayeka mask as a microcosmic coding, it becomes known. Any attempt to represent the unknown has to keep changing – like the Chapayekas. The Chapayekas as

representations of Otherness and the unknown are also a mediation point between the known and the unknown. The clown as a paradoxical Other, at the same time known and unknown, is in this way a mediator between the Yaquis and the unknown power inherent in the universe. Cosmologically, this relation is much more important than who are the Yaquis in relation to specific figures. The masks of Yoris and animals and other beings are literally that, masks through which the power can be dealt with.

### **Clowning as a double trope**

In a way, there isn't any direct representation of 'the Yaquis' in the ritual. Perhaps the Yaquis are represented indirectly, through the otherness of the Chapayekas and implicitly in the larger frame, the outcome of the ritual, the fact that someone does this hard labor to put the world right. Yaquiness forms an undifferentiated ground for the figures of Others, but can this dialectic be reversed, does the otherness form a ground for the figure of the Yaquis? If the Chapayekas are a trope that answers the question 'who are we not?', does the metaphoric representation of powerful others evoke a shadow trope of the self? This question can be expanded to other expressions of the clowns that work through inappropriateness, inversion, or reversal. These kinds of expressions really bring out the relativity of tropes and how they impinge on previous relations and points of reference.

In many aspects, Chapayeka behavior is the inverse or reverse of "normal human behavior," in this instance, what is considered appropriate adult male behavior for a Yaqui. Painter (1986: 236) describes how the normally reserved and quiet Yaqui men put on the mask and become noisy and restless. Reversal is very common among the North American ritual clowns (Christen 1998: 177; see also Steward 1929). While some North American ritual clowns say the opposite of what they mean (yes for no, etc.) the Chapayekas may not speak at all. They communicate – quite extensively – by signs and gestures, which include icons, indexes and symbols, some used only by the Chapayekas, others common gestures in Mexico. The Chapayekas do everything left-handed, and with the back turned. Besides the substitution of sign language for speech, left for right and turning their backs to greet or address someone, there are other differences that set the Chapayekas apart. One example is the way Chapayekas display emotion. While the rest of the ritual figures behave with an unchanging seriousness, the Chapayekas often display emotion by physical action. They laugh by putting a hand in front of their mouth and shaking. They stomp off in anger and jump and shy in fear.

As expressions, inversions and reversals are tropes that refer to whatever they are inverting or reversing, the things they turn upside down. Figure 17 is an obviation diagram of a very short bit of clowning done by one of the circus clowns. The Chapayekas were marching in lines during a konti. He came to a tiny puddle in the dirt road, one that could have been easily stepped over. Instead the Chapayeka stopped short, looked very carefully at the puddle, hesitated in a will-I-jump-or-not way, then with a great effort, made a flatfooted hop with both feet. Then he stopped and turned to look at the puddle again, before marching on. Although this bit of clowning can be diagrammed, and it shows a tropic sequence of obviation with its reversals and substitutions, diagramming a joke doesn't tell us why it's potentially funny. The actual expression presented in the diagram evokes and depends upon another, absent or imaginary, but somehow plausible, trope to be meaningful as a joke.

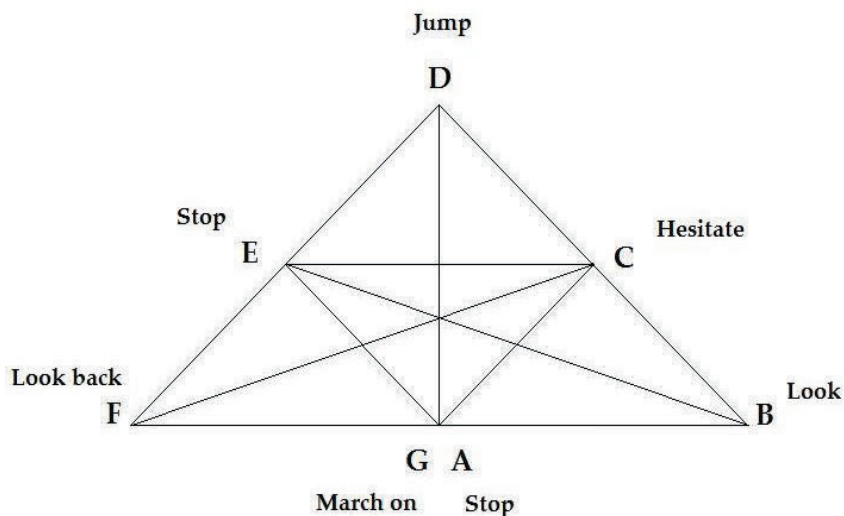


Figure 17. An obviation diagram of a bit of Chapayeka clowning.

Most humor studies have focused on verbal joking. Jokes, as well as the use of irony as a trope, have a kind of double character, they involve a paradox: they say one thing and also its opposite at the same time. There is a theory of humor that states that humor simultaneously makes use of two

opposite scripts (Raskin 1985: 99). The two opposed meanings or scripts can be seen as two tropes. One is the actual one that is expressed, and the other is the “competing script” (ibid. 125), what I have called the absent trope, that is not directly expressed but evoked, as necessary for the trope to be recognized as humor, play, or irony. The Chapayeka clowning tropes play on appropriate and inappropriate through reversal and scale. For the puddle example, one appropriate version would be to just step over the puddle, and there would be no trope, as it wouldn’t stand out as meaningful expression, as performance. The actions and forms of the sequence of the absent trope that creates the appropriateness/inappropriateness of the Chapayeka’s actions would be the same, coming to an obstacle, appraising it, jumping, taking stock and then moving on. The point that connects the two tropes is **D**, the jump. For the trope of the Chapayeka to be appropriate, the puddle would have to be different. If, however, the puddle were bigger, the jump at point **D** would have been too small, and the trope would have again been inappropriate. This bit of clowning then has a built in paradox. Even though the absent trope, the other script, makes the actual one meaningful as clowning, it does not resolve the paradox.

I will give an example of a more complicated piece of clowning. During a Chapayeka relay, a boy was playing and getting close to the Chapayekas and was caught. Several Chapayekas gathered to examine him, the clown wanted to spray him in the face with his can of foam. When the boy lost his nerve and started to cry, the Chapayekas changed demeanor and tried to soothe him. When the boy cried even harder, the orejona picked him up in his arms and rocked him like a baby. One one level, it is inappropriate for the Chapayekas to try to soothe the boy, when they are the ones who frightened him in the first place. At the same time, it is appropriate for the Chapayekas to frighten and punish the boy for his transgression of coming too close to the Chapayekas. In this trope, the double paradox at **D** is actually appropriate in both the actual image of the Chapayekas frightening the boy and in the imaginary trope, where the Chapayekas comfort the boy. The paradox is the inverse of the trope of the clown jumping the puddle, where the part that connects the actual and the imaginary trope is inappropriate in both.

This sequence also shows very clearly how one trope motivates the next. The action goes back and forth between the reactions of the boy and the Chapayekas. This also shows the way action can be improvised in the sense that the boy is not acting or performing, he is reacting in an unprescribed way, which the Chapayekas react to. At the same time, both the boy’s and the Chapayekas’ reactions are grounded in convention, the Chapayekas must act



as Chapayekas, and the boy acts on the basis of his experience with the Chapayekas.

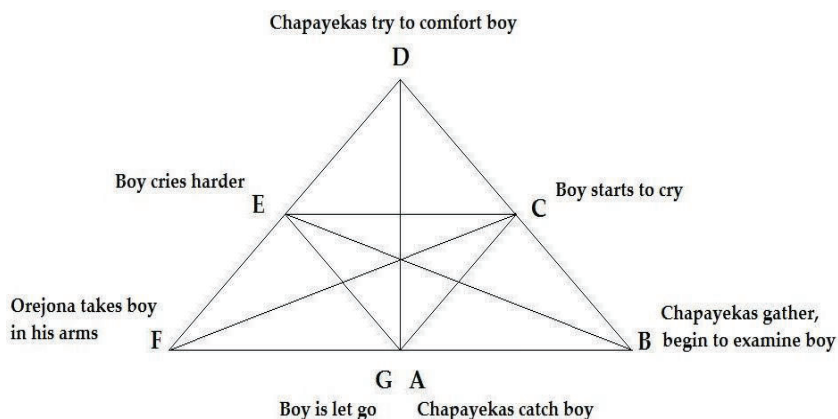


Figure 18. An obviation diagram of the Chapayekas clowning with a boy

The way I have diagrammed it, I have shown the actions of clowning to share its top corner with an imaginary trope that is not directly expressed, but is evoked and a part of the meaning of the actual trope. This tip of the triangle is a paradox, a point of reference that is simultaneously two relations, which may be either appropriate or inappropriate in both the imaginary and actual tropes, which are mirror images of each other.

### Turning dichotomies into paradoxes

The part of the Chapayekas catching the crying boy can be funny, or to someone who sympathizes with the boy, not so funny. If the trope is looked at simply as the Chapayekas hurting the boy by scaring him, it loses its double character. The appropriate/inappropriate tension collapses. This can be looked at as relativization. Relativization is related to ambiguity, in the sense that two things or flows that should be distinct, indeed opposites that give each other meaning, become similar. Relativization happens when the realms that serve as the control and as the focus of meaningful action become too similar and action starts to lose its meaning, or when contexts that are continually articulated together start to permeate and resemble each other. (Wagner 1981: 134). It is the loss of meaningful differences. Relativization is often perceived in the form of a threat and can be countered by a reversal of the mode of

symbolization and new content (ibid. 105). For example a “bad death” or a lack of observing correct procedures afterwards may result in ghosts and hauntings, the relativization of the dead and the living, for the Habu (ibid. 93) just as well as in Western societies. These relativizations, which can also be looked at as uncontrolled flow reversals, are countered by controlled reversals expressed in ritual. Killing Jesus in the Easter ritual is an example of a controlled reversal. On another level of trope, the Chapayekas guard against relativization of Yaqui ritual. It is the Chapayekas that keep the Fariseos and the church group apart and different. The church group mediates the power of Jesus, and the power mediated by the Chapayekas provides a counterpart to this. Without the Chapayekas, the ritual would be performed only by the means of conventionalizing symbolization, and possibly the distinctions between the ceremonial groups would fade.

If relativization can serve as both motivation and threaten to rid the motivation of meaning, and is related to ambiguity, this sounds like a description of clowns and humor. As a being that creates and crosses borders, the clown controls relativization by embodying it. A clown is ambiguous and ambivalent, but the disparate elements never become blended, they are always kept apart as poles of a dialectic. The clown is a mediating boundary that is able to bring together opposite concepts while keeping the distinction intact. The Chapayekas carry the opposition of sacred and profane, the boundary and the dialectic within their figure. By adding mediation, they insert a boundary and make paradoxes of the dichotomies between sacred and profane, center and margin, or dirt and purity.

In the Yaqui Easter, sacredness is most easily identified in places, objects, and actions. The figures, the altar, and the church are sacred. The konti, and the plaza, marked by the crosses, are sacred. Singing and dancing by the church group and the Matachines are sacred actions, which also make spaces sacred. In the fiestas, the taking round of San Ramon, and in the objects like the palm leaves, the sacredness is extended to house holds as well. The sacredness is recreated periodically. It is as if sacredness, as power, becomes diluted with time and so has to be recreated. This fits well with the entire scheme, where the cosmology needs the periodical intervention of ritual to be renewed.

On one hand, the Chapayekas are quite clearly opposed to the sacred. In this sense, the Chapayekas are even a kind of indexical marker of the sacred; in their fear of it, they react very strongly to sacred objects and words. At the same time, they have many attributes of sacredness. The Chapayekas are the most untouchable in Yaqui ritual. I argue that the ban on taking pictures of them is a part of this. All other performers may be photographed, and, for

example the figures of Jesus can be touched to acquire blessings. The Chapayekas themselves must not be touched and should not even be looked at too intensely. The masks are the most untouchable part, hedged with taboos from their making to until they are burned. The first Chapayeka emerges from the altar, the very center of sacredness. The classic definition of sacred by Émile Durkheim comes from the separation between the sacred and the profane: "the sacred thing par excellence is which the profane should not touch, and cannot touch with impunity" (Durkheim 1965: 55). However, in ritual, there must be some kind of mediation between the sacred and the profane. The Chapayekas embody the boundary between them, and this way provide a mediation that allows the boundary to be crossed but keeps the distinction intact.

### **Conclusions: the mediation of mediation**

The two sides of the Chapayeka performance accomplish different things for the ritual. They are poles of a dialectic, and it is this dialectic, and the ability to reverse it at will, that makes the figure so powerful and important for the ritual as a whole. The invention side of their performance is not comic relief intended to keep people interested in the rest of the ritual as Rosamond Spicer has suggested, or unimportant side stuff as clowning is often dismissed as, but an important part of the entire ritual and the recreation of cosmology. In their conventional aspect the Chapayekas provide a dialectical counterpart for Jesus, by invention, they provide a counterpart for the convention. The Yaqui cosmology is one of renewal, cycles, sacrifice, movement, and power. The Chapayekas tap power and mediate between the Yaquis and certain kinds of power. The Yaqui Easter has been called "performing the renewal of community" (Spicer and Crumrine 1997). An important part of this renewal is the renewal of the Chapayeka figures, their mask, and their performance. This is accomplished through figure-ground reversals with the ritual, done by changing the mode of symbolization. Humor and clowning are the most accessible way of switching modes, and this is why clowns are the most accessible way of incorporating dialectical logic into a conventional form.

Through the figure ground reversals the clowns participate in different levels of trope; within the ritual and beyond it. Taken as a whole, this means the Chapayekas have a paradoxical relation to relativization. In their performance they give representations of it, but they ultimately guard the ritual and religious symbols against relativization. In the same way that clowns mediate between other opposites, they mediate relativization, which amounts to the mediation of mediation.

## Chapter 7

### Other Cosmologies, Other Clowns

#### Dialectical logic

Looking at the ritual as a trope instead of a collection of individual symbols brings out its internal relations and the meaning of the conventional side of the Chapayeka performance. Considering the Chapayeka performance as shifting between invention and convention shows how the Chapayekas mediate between the trope, the macrocosm and the collectivity. Looking at how they embody and enable dialectics also shows how they mediate boundaries between opposed concepts, such as sacred and profane. The analysis based on a more holistic view of meaning can be extended to other aspects of the Chapayeka, to other clown and trickster figures, and the schemes of meaning that have informed previous studies on them. The concepts of good and evil and their proper relation in different logics provide a point of departure for including previous studies and other clowns in my analysis.

The Chapayeka is associated with Judas and the killing of Christ, yet they are an integral part of the blessings generated by the ritual. Their feared masks are also called *sewa*, flower, which in Yaqui culture is the ultimate symbol of good. The *Pascolas* are the sons of the devil, and also the benevolent hosts of fiestas. While the Yaqui clowns incorporate elements of good and evil in their figure, in Western culture the representations are split: usually the clown is supposed to be a pleasant figure, but there are also many extremely negative representations of clowns (see Bouissac 1990). Many people find clowns unpleasant or creepy, and monster clowns are a veritable genre of Western popular culture. It is common for clowns to have both good and evil associations, but these are conceived differently depending on whether there is a dialectical logic at work or one that aims for the articulation of a single principle.

The relationship between the conventions of culture and the dialectic of invention can be maintained in two possible ways. Either “the dialectic can be used consciously to mediate the conventional forms, or the articulation of conventionalized contexts into a conscious unity can be used to mediate the dialectic.” (Wagner 1981: 116). In Wagner’s model, dialectical logic is associated with the differentiating mode whereas those societies that conventionally collectivize invoke a linear causality. “Dialectical thought and action addresses itself to the mechanics of differentiation against a background of similarity; collectivizing or rationalist approaches emphasize integration and the element

of similarity against a background of differences.” Mediating the conventional dialectically makes “differentiation (including the qualities of paradox, contradiction, and reciprocal interaction) the basis of thought and action.” If the dialectic is mediated through the conventional, thought and action are patterned “on a model of consistent, rational and systematic articulation.” Paradox and contradiction are avoided and the dialectic is repressed. (ibid. 116).

<b>dialectic</b>	<b>single principle</b>
<i>two both equally important principles</i>	<i>one principle must be chosen as primary</i>
<i>back and forth movement between two opposed poles</i>	<i>linear progression</i>
<i>the dialectic is the way to work things out</i>	<i>the dialectic is a problem to be solved</i>
<i>paradox, contradiction</i>	<i>rule, axiom</i>
<i>relates things to each other, defines principles against each other</i>	<i>all things are defined in relation to one principle</i>
<i>stable</i>	<i>unstable</i>
<i>differentiating against a background of similarity</i>	<i>integration, emphasizing the element of similarity against a background of differences</i>

Figure 19. Table of dialectical and unitary logics

The dialectical logic can take the form of a creative alternation between two sets of relations, each of which is conceptualized in dialectical terms. The nature of each set reflects and reinforces that of the other. This could mean the alternation of sacred and profane periods, a model of (and for) gender relations etc. The distinctions between the sets are important because they are the means of social self-invention. (ibid. 120-121). Since the dialectic embodies the means of cultural change and continuity, using the dialectic to mediate conventional forms maintains “an inherent stability” (ibid. 116). In the linear causality invoked by collectivizing groups, although the used controls stand in

a dialectical relationship to one another, this relationship is continually expressed and reinvented in nondialectical form. It is perceived and constituted as the linear organization of society as a whole in relation to god or to nature. Contradiction, paradox, and reciprocity are denied and de-emphasized. The dialectic is masked. Ignoring its own internal dialectic, society loses the ability to maintain its conventional orientation. Ongoing relativization becomes an inevitable part of social action as there is nothing to check it. Instead of dialectically, society motivates itself historically. Instead of a solution, the dialectic poses a major problem. The mediation of the dialectic doesn't mean it ceases to exist, but that the mediation makes its expression and operation dependent upon nondialectical means. Mediating the dialectic through the conventional is thus inherently unstable. (ibid. 124).

The dialectic is always there; in the dialectical logic it is accepted and it is put to use to create meaning. When the idea is to articulate a single principle, the dialectic is suppressed and presents a problem rather than a solution, but despite efforts to focus it into a single unitary principle, the dialectic never goes away, but keeps popping up. Good and evil as they are often conceived of in Western thought is the perfect example of this. As concepts they depend on each other for meaning and definition, but their relation is seen as a struggle, one trying to destroy the other. Good and evil in a dialectical logic are opposed to each other, but they are accepted as the defining conditions of each other and this is put to use in symbolic expression. One must certainly protect oneself from dangerous things, but the worldview is not based on the struggle of one force to destroy the other, rather their alternation.

### **The Chapayekas as both good and evil**

The Western non-dialectical view of good and evil has impinged on the analysis of the Chapayekas. Although the "dual character" or ambivalence of the Chapayekas is noted in previous ethnography, the evilness of the Chapayekas has been emphasized. Spicer says that: "the soldiers of Rome and the Chapayekas represent the worst kind of evil." He also calls the ritual "a drama of the triumph of good over evil." (Spicer 1980: 81). These views are reflected in other ethnographies as well, despite the fact that they, like Spicer, also cite statements of disagreement from the Yaquis, noting that they did not like to see the Chapayekas as evil and did not see the ritual as the triumph of good over evil. (Painter 1986: 218, 221, 234; Spicer 1980: 112,113).

After reading these ethnographies, when I first saw the Easter ritual in 2004, I was surprised to see figures such as Popeye and el Chavo del Ocho from a popular TV show, not to mention a Chapayeka version of the deer

dancer, usually portrayed as a very positive figure. True to their dialectical nature, the Chapayekas have both good and evil associations. The Chapayekas represent Judas and are a part of the forces opposing Jesus and the church group, but their presence is always acknowledged as necessary for the ritual. Many of the symbols associated with the Chapayekas, such as the flower, are very positive. At the same time, many do have aggressive features, for example the masks that represent animals often have teeth showing, the tips sometimes painted red. The circus clown masks look downright psychotic, with crazy eyes and leering smiles. On the other hand, those that do represent something that is easier to interpret as a representation of evil, like the devil or the vampire, have funny features as well. For example, the vampire carried a very cute little stuffed toy bat.

When I asked people straight out if the Chapayekas were evil, (*malo*) the answers were always qualified, never unequivocal: one Chapayeka performer said, well, yes, they are the bad guys of the story (*los malos de la película*). Another performer gave a calm answer of yes. Both to questions of “are the Chapayekas evil?” – “yes.” And “are the Chapayekas good?” – “yes.”

I also heard a mother explain to her children, who, after watching the Chapayekas try to catch the children who perform as *Angelitos*, asked if the Chapayekas are evil (*son malos?*), that to the *Angelitos* they are. When I talked to performers about choosing the figure to portray in their mask, they said they might choose a figure they liked, or one that somehow caught their imagination. The evilness of the character never came up. At the same time it was clear that the Chapayekas are potentially dangerous. One must be careful around the Chapayekas and treat them with respect. The Chapayekas also have the authority to punish wrong behavior and I was told that they are more strict than other ritual authorities. The Chapayekas may also tempt people into wrong behavior, and then punish it. Laughing at the Chapayekas is not necessarily considered bad or a mistake. It is in support of their work. At the same time, one must know when and where; in the church everyone must be respectful (interview with Chapayeka performer, field notes).

The combination of good and evil features is another example of the dialectical nature of the Chapayekas. How is the specific paradox of being both good and evil a part of how the ritual works? And why did the other writers want to downplay the paradoxical and contradictory features and preferred a straightforward, if one-sided, interpretation of the Chapayekas as evil? I argue that the previous interpretations are based on a Christian conception of good and evil typical to Western culture that does not correspond to the world view embodied in Yaqui ritual. I have already showed how the Christian narrative

of a linear and irreversible progression from partly human to a fully divine figure was transformed into a dialectical alternation of opposed cycles of death and rebirth that create and recreate each other and revitalize the cosmology. There are further differences. The imagery of Easter in the European Christian tradition emphasizes the suffering of Christ during the crucifixion on one hand and the guilt of humans on the other hand. The topic of a radio show in Finland at Easter time in 2008 was described in the following way: "The historical roots of the events of Easter [are] evil and wickedness. The human is the cruelest of all animals" ([www.yleradio1.fi/kirsivirtanen](http://www.yleradio1.fi/kirsivirtanen), my translation). Suffering, pain, guilt, and evil are the themes of European Passion Plays, Easter church services, and movies such as *The Passion of Christ* (2004) directed by Mel Gibson.

When the Christian narrative became part of the Yaqui tradition, it was embedded in and reinterpreted from a different world view. The models of dialectical logic and the logic of articulating a single principle enable two different ways of thinking about good and evil. In dialectical thought, the simultaneous existence of opposites is not a problem; if anything, it is a source of power, as well as stability and balance. However, when the relation is conceived of as the articulation of a single principle, there is a tendency to congeal the opposition into a classification that places things firmly into a hierarchical system of categories. Good and evil become a dichotomy, and the dialectic becomes a problem that must be resolved by choosing one or the other as primary. Interpreting the Chapayekas as evil and calling the Yaqui easter ritual the triumph of good over evil is in itself an example of "the articulation of conventionalized contexts into a conscious unity... used to mediate the dialectic" (Wagner 1981: 116). It is an attempt to interpret the ritual in accordance with a single principle. Even though the Yaquis have embraced the Catholic deities, and obviously find the ritual of the sacrifice and rebirth of Jesus to be very important, this does not mean that they have automatically adopted a wholly Christian worldview with it. Although the symbolic content is familiar, there is a different logic of symbolization at work. The simultaneous presence of good and evil in the Yaqui Easter ritual and the figure of the Chapayeka is not a problem to be solved, but part of the power and efficacy of the ritual and also its continuity. Yaqui religion does not emphasize guilt or suffering, but hard work and fulfilling one's duty. There is responsibility and obligation, but its source is not guilt, it is rather the result of a dialectical bond, the mutual responsibility that implicates both humans and deities. The Christian deities give health and blessings to the Yaquis, but they earn these blessings through fulfilling their sacred vows in ritual labor. Cycles



of sacrifice are the normal order. The Christian Jesus as saviour and humans as guilty of his murder presents a similar dialectic, but the sacrifice presents a paradox which leaves humans as sinful and guilty, never quite good enough for being saved.

The Chapayekas as both good and evil corresponds to other aspects of Yaqui culture. For example, there is also no clear-cut division of good and evil in the deer dance. The deer is represented as somewhat antagonistic to the Yaquis as well as a very good and benevolent being. The Yaquis hunted deer, and real deer were considered to possess magic, able to bewitch the hunter (Painter 1986: 278-9). According to myths Pascolas who hunt and kill the deer are the sons of the devil, who were asked to come and dance at the first fiesta. (Giddings 1959: 148). In the deer dance, the Pascolas are very benevolent, they act as hosts, and make the people laugh. In the Easter ritual, the whole deer group is on the side of the church at the final battle. Painter briefly mentions conceptions of hell and the devil. According to her informants and Yaqui sermons, hell is darkness. However, there is the idea that hell is not necessarily a permanent state, a person can get out, and suffering happens mainly on earth. The devil is not only the fairly benign character described in the Pascola myths, but also referred to as "our enemy," evilhearted, full of hate and envy. The devil takes different forms and deceives people. A witch is "the devil's pupil." (Painter 1985: 91-92).

### **Unitary logic: good and evil as a dichotomy**

In a unitary logic good and evil are seen as an absolute dichotomy and the hierarchical superiority of good over evil is emphasized. This is not the only model found in modern Western representations of good and evil, but it is certainly present in the interpretations given of the Chapayekas. I also want to present a somewhat extreme version the unitary model as an analytical counterpart to the dialectical one in order to make my argument clear. In this model of Christianity, good and evil are essentialized and personified in God and the devil. The devil is depicted as a fallen angel. In the beginning there is only heaven and good. The division of good and evil begins in the devil's rebellion and fall from grace, which leads to a war between the two sides, expected to come to an end in the 'final battle', Armageddon. Humans are seen as caught between these two powers. Adam and Eve are in the Garden of Eden, where the devil appears in the form of a snake to tempt them to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Humankind falls into the state of sin and becomes aware of good and evil in the same moment. This begins the race of the humans to beat sin, to struggle against evil, and return to the state

of grace. The goal is to kill or destroy whatever is evil – just as evil is seen as a force trying to destroy good. The particular manifestations of good and evil are metonymical representations of the basic principle.

This view of good and evil creates a neverending race. The evil cannot be totally banished but cannot be accepted either. The conflict is never fully resolved, but admitting this conflict as the base on which the whole thing exists is problematic, too. The promised resolution is the final battle – and end of the world. If in more dialectical systems good and evil can be seen as complementary or as the context-dependent two sides of the same being, concept, or force, or the conflict of opposites is accepted as productive or otherwise necessary, the current Western view tends to deny this.

“In mediaeval Christianity God and the devil, order and disorder, regularity and accident, divine spirit and gargoyle, had been in intimate communication with each other. The burgeoning Protestant world banished the disorderly, accident and irrational in the interests of orderliness, predictability and rationality.” (Wolf 2007: 148).

Narratives are often structured as stories about a struggle between good and evil and the goal is to annihilate evil. There is a telling moment in an episode of the tv-show *Masters of Horror*, which deals with the Native American myth of the deer woman. The deer woman is half human and half deer, and appears as a beautiful woman who seduces men and then stomps them to death, if they do not notice her hooves in time. On hearing the myth, the anglo American police man asks: “How does the story end? How do you kill it?” (Landis 2005). In the frame of Native American myths, the question seems strange and irrelevant. Myths may sometimes end in killing a monster, but the lessons of the myths are usually about living right so as to avoid danger, not about working towards the ultimate goal of the triumph of good over evil metonymically portrayed in destroying an evil enemy. This, however, is what many Western stories are about, and this is how the Yaqui Easter and the Chapayeka performances have been interpreted, as a story about how to destroy evil.

### **The trickster and the devil**

There are many connections between the devil and the trickster; the clown is also identified with the devil. Some writers don't even see a need to elaborate: “The connection between the clown and the devil thus is obvious and probably always was... the role of the devil was always given to the funniest of the comedians” (Zucker 1954: 312). Paul Radin also notes that the

trickster is connected with the devil, and the trickster is “not guided by normal conceptions of good or evil” (Radin 1956: 147, 155). The ambivalence is clear:

“Trickster is at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself... At all times he is constrained to behave as he does from impulses over which he has no control, he knows no good nor evil yet he is responsible for both. He possesses no values... is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being.” (ibid. ix).

Barbara Babcock also concludes that the trickster is not straightforwardly good or evil (Babcock 1975: 149-150, *et passim*).

The trickster is also the conman (Hyde 1998: 11). This idea is given a modern twist in Neil Gaiman's novel *American Gods*, where, forgotten by people, the Norwegian trickster god Loki and Odin make a living as conmen. Both the devil and the trickster are associated with lies, trickery, deceit, creating false impressions, and temptation. According to the Bible the devil is “the father of lies” (John 8:44), while Lewis Hyde credits tricksters with creating the first lie. For example, Hermes brings the first lie into the world. (Hyde 1998: 63). Often the devil is depicted as tempting humans into sinning as an act of free will, starting with the serpent luring Eve in the garden of Eden. Temptation and greed are also big themes in the trickster stories. The trickster, however, is rarely depicted as a very powerful figure, like the devil. He will tempt others in order to benefit himself, but he himself is never able to resist temptation. The trickster rarely challenges anyone directly but plays tricks on them, deceives and fools them. “The devil as clown is the antagonist of the whole cosmic order, but he is not a power in his own right.” (Zucker 1954: 312).

The Christian devil is identified with the flesh as opposed to the spirit, which is identified with God. The trickster is also identified with flesh and the body. He is “earthly” and connected to food, sex, and excrement. In the Christian system, where God, spirit, and goodness are identified with seriousness and loftiness, and opposed to evil, flesh, and imperfection, the fallible, often foolish trickster is seen to belong with the devil. In addition to the conceptual association there is a historical connection; during the history and development of the devil in Christianity, various other spirits and deities have been absorbed (Báez-Jorge 2003: 57). In later times, it was a general policy of missionaries to identify indigenous deities with the devil. Some figures have been identified with saints, the most important and well known being female deities such as Tonanzin in Mexico and Pachamama of the Incas who have

been identified with the Virgin Mary. Trickster gods, however, were generally identified with the devil and many traits from them are still recognisable in the figure of the devil. The horns, cloven feet and tailed appearance of the devil come from other, “pagan” gods, such as the trickster figure Pan (ibid. 90).

Hyde, however, points out that the trickster is not the same as the devil, and sees the connection as only rising from the efforts of the missionaries to suppress the indigenous deities. He says that there is no room for tricksters in a system of “a single high god opposed by a single embodiment of evil” and that the trickster is amoral, not immoral. (Hyde 1998: 10). Hyde has a point in saying the Christian system in its ideal form leaves no room for tricksters, but the difference is better conceived of as that between dialectical and unitary logic, rather than polytheism and monotheism – the Yaquis, as Catholics, are not exactly polytheistic. Also, it is not enough to say the trickster is amoral, or beyond good and evil, his connection to the moral in a particular context still needs to be examined.

### **Good, evil, and the devil in Mexican world views**

The cihuateteo were human women, who had died in childbirth and became deities. They have been venerated and feared as powerful deities, with potential to be both benevolent and dangerous (Key 2008). The way the description is phrased in the wikipedia entry for the cihuateteo gives a vivid example of good and evil coming in the same package:

“in Aztec mythology, the Cihuateteo... were the spirits of human women who died in childbirth. Childbirth was considered a form of battle, and its victims were honored as fallen warriors. Their physical remains were thought to strengthen soldiers in battle while their spirits became the much-feared Cihuateteo who accompanied the setting sun in the west. They also haunted crossroads at night, stealing children and causing sicknesses, especially seizures and madness, and seducing men to sexual misbehavior.” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cihuateteo>).

Looked at in the context of the Western good – evil dichotomy, this would be completely incomprehensible. How could the women who die in childbirth be both honored as brave warriors, and feared as evil spirits? In the Mexican worldviews I am considering, this doesn't seem to present a problem. Many of the beings in the Mesoamerican pantheons are benevolent or malevolent towards humans depending on the context, for example, the treatment they receive. In the Aztec and Maya origin myths the world is created – and destroyed – through dialectical oppositions of different forces

and materials. The cosmology is formed by a primordial couple, a pair of gods or committees of gods, rather than by one creator god. (Bierhorst 1990: 145-8).

I have shown how the Christian linear and monologic transformation of Jesus from a semi human into a fully divine being has been transformed in Yaqui religion into a dialectic of opposed forces that creates and perpetuates a cosmological cycle of death and rebirth. A similar transformation is reflected in the ways Christian materials have been reinvented by other indigenous groups in Mexico. A list of oppositions shows how the devil is considered as the counterpart to Jesus by the Tepehuas:

<b>Jesus Christ</b>	<b>The Devil</b>
<i>sun</i>	<i>moon</i>
<i>day</i>	<i>night</i>
<i>lord of the humans</i>	<i>enemy of the humans</i>
<i>christmas</i>	<i>carneval</i>
<i>good winds</i>	<i>bad winds</i>

Figure 20. A table of oppositions between Jesus and the Devil for the Tepehuas (Báez-Jorge 2003: 413, my translation).

The opposition is very consistent, and reads like a textbook example of the attributes of a dialectical logic: there is a back and forth movement between two opposed poles of two both equally important principles, which are defined against each other. Each aspect has its counterpart, and both – for example the sun and the moon – have their position in the cosmology.

The dialectical logic that can accommodate the simultaneous presence of good and evil affected the reception of the Christian devil. The concept was introduced to the indigenous groups in Mexico by missionaries in the course of the conquest. The usual strategy of the missionaries was to label the indigenous deities evil and group them with the devil in terms the Christian good/evil system. However, the results weren't always as straightforward as the missionaries would have liked. As the Pascola myths show, the devil isn't necessarily seen as the embodiment of pure evil. How the figure of the devil was further conceptualized and developed was greatly influenced by the indigenous world views. The devil did become a part of the pantheon of supernatural beings in Mexico, but in many cases, rather than accept the ideas that the native spirits would be aligned with evil, the invading conquerors and their culture became associated with evil. This resulted in evil and the devil being linked to alterity in Mexico. In some stories and representations the devil

appears as a fancily dressed Ladino or white man (Báez-Jorge 2003: 384, 390, 395).

The connection to otherness is clear in the Chapayekas and other clown figures. In contrast, Jesus and the Virgin are not considered foreign, but have been placed securely within Yaqui land and history. The Chapayeka mask also illustrates the power of otherness: the power and potential of the mask can go in both good and evil directions, both in terms of the individual performer and the entire cosmology. The other is very powerful, potentially dangerous and evil, but this power can also be tapped to result in blessings. The self has to be kept distinct from the other.

Representations of the devil, evil, or otherness in ritual are related to the collective and the moral. The power that is tapped goes into the ritual. Another notable way the devil comes up is in stories of individuals who tap the power of the devil for personal enhancement, but this entails an irreversible relativization. They go to a certain cave to seek the devil and make a pact with him. In these cases the person receives something, usually money or other possessions, in exchange for his life and soul. The devil may also take the guise of a handsome Ladino or beautiful woman in order to tempt someone not looking for him (Baez-Jorge 2003: 399, 431, 579 et passim).

### **Funny and serious as a dichotomy**

The unitary logic favored in Western society in religion and science has resulted in a hierarchical dichotomy of good and evil, which has made the analysis of comic figures all the more difficult. There is a similar dichotomy between funny and serious. Serious is more valued than funny, and this “bias against the comic” has been reflected in both the study of arts and social science (Babcock 1984: 113; Bakhtin 1984: 4, Doty & Hynes 1993: 13). Traditionally, only the serious has been worth studying. Serious and important are almost synonymous. Comic phenomena have been largely ignored, and when they have been studied, usually the focus is not on the humor itself, which is seen as something extraneous to something more important. Many of the texts written about clowns begin by stating that there is a bias against clowns, and that they deserve more attention and must be returned to honor (see for example Babcock 1984: 107). Usually this is done by stripping away the humor and pointing out how serious the clowns really are. Sometimes studies on clowns justify the topic by saying that the clowns are important because they are “not mere clowns” (see, for example, Steward 1991 [1929]: 3, 7). Louis Hieb says that certain Hopi ritual figures have been called clowns but that

"they are figures who... represent other *more fundamental* categories of religious specialists" (1977: 172, emphasis added).

Compared to the more sober genres, humor has been studied very little. Like clowns and tricksters, humor is ambiguous, difficult to locate, pin down and examine. It is difficult to find a definition. For example, something that makes people laugh, something that is intended to be comic or funny, do not work because something may or may not be funny at different times to different people regardless of the intentions. Laughter and humor may or may not be connected. (Apte 1985: 1-2). The theories on humor mostly come from psychology, although the matter has been studied in linguistics, folklore and anthropology as well (ibid. 22-23).

Analysis has often associated humor with hostility and the negative. The theories, mostly based on verbal humor, fall into three groups: hostility, incongruence, and release theories. These coincide with social, cognitive, and psychological analyses. The first theory states that humor comes from a feeling of hostility towards the target, laughing at something or someone and feeling superior. The incongruence theory sees humor as containing a paradox or impossibility. A joke is a kind of cognitive puzzle to be worked out in the mind. A person on hearing and understanding a sentence finds an incongruence and finds this funny. The release theory states that humor and laughter offer a release of psychological energy. (Attardo 1994: 47).

While in theory the scientists have usually looked for the serious in the funny, in practice the comedians have looked for ways to make the people laugh. The relation between humor and negative things is noted on both sides, but phrased differently. Often repeated phrases in the theater are "comedy is based on fear" or the quote attributed to the British writer Charles Lamb "anything awful makes me laugh." According to Aristotle, the difference between comedy and tragedy is that tragedy shows people as better than they really are, and comedy as worse. (Aristoteles 1998: 13). I would argue, however, that on the side of the artists the dialectical nature is much more accepted, as the emphasis is on interaction. At the same time, while in theater the idea that drama is based on conflict takes the form of two wills and goals in conflict, on the level of narrative the resolution is nevertheless expected to be the articulation of a single principle.

Studies of humor mostly focus on the content and form of jokes and assume universal functions for humor. Very few studies look at the meaning of humor in its cultural context beyond superficial statements of hostility towards a certain group, or comic relief in an otherwise tense situation. The anthropological studies of joking relations in kinship provide analyses of a

cultural context that requires joking, but the studies tend to focus on the conventional side of the phenomenon. If ritual has been studied as function and representation, this has been the case for comic expressions as well. Portraits of "the Whiteman" by Keith Basso offers wonderful detailed description of joking performances where Apaches make fun of the Whitemen, but the analysis seems to focus on identifying the serious statement hidden in the joke. Basso discusses the "interpretive and social functions" of the joking and finds that the "performances are little morality plays in which Western Apaches affirm their conceptions of what is "right" and proper by dramatizing their conceptions of what is "wrong" and inappropriate." (Basso 1979: 76). This does not explain why the Apaches would express this in a joke instead of just making a statement, or why the jokes are considered funny. The joking performances described by Basso could be looked at as a way to both create dialectical mediation between the Apaches and their others, the Whitemen. Turning to mimicry reverses the mode of symbolization, reversing also the orientation of the participants. As a figure-ground reversal, the joking performance makes it possible to draw and control a boundary between the self and other. If the inappropriately intimate behavior of the Whiteman is a kind of unwanted attempt at relativization, joking is a more efficient way of stopping that relativization than a simple statement about the inappropriateness would be. Joking makes it possible to engage with the whitemen and take a perspective on them, while keeping intact the boundary between the apaches and the whitemen. I argue that this is why the joking is funny, and why it is an efficacious and satisfactory way to express something about the relation between Apaches and the Whitemen.

The study of humor has suffered from the same problems as the study of clowns. The need to put the dialectic into the articulation of a single principle necessarily deflates the material and collapses the mediation. I suspect this is also the reason that so much humor research is so depressing. If the tendency to suppress the dialectic is somewhat explained by the conventional orientation of scholarship, there is still the question why, when the scholars look for the single principle that would order the dialectical material, do they so often choose the negative? Why does the funny so easily slip into evil? I have argued that humor creates a double trope; the actual expressed trope partly relies on points of reference that are not actually expressed but are evoked as a kind of absent trope. Horror, despite an apparent similarity of content and even form (Carroll 1999), is actually the opposite of this, the collapse of mediation. I will begin my discussion of horror as a genre in Western popular culture, but understood as inauspicious



relativization, there are elements of horror in any cosmology or mythology. Horror *is* relativization, while humor plays with mediated relativization.

### **Humor and horror**

As genres in Western popular culture, horror and comedy have an affinity. They share both content and forms. Both also intend to affect spectators emotionally by shocking them into a different state. There is also the genre of comedic horror, where fear and laughter alternate. Horror that fails to scare can turn to the ridiculous. Noël Carroll argues that both horror and humor are created by the same techniques, the manipulation of categories and boundaries. In an article on the connection between horror and humor Carroll points out that the monsters in horror movies are not just dangerous, they are impure in the sense that they violate categories. For example, they can be either mixes (vampires, werewolves) or an impossible size (giant spiders). (Carroll 1999: 152).

The clown is a figure that seems to give itself well to fear and horror. Horror clowns are a genre onto themselves, appearing in books and films such as Stephen King's *It*, *Killer Klowns from Outer Space*, and *Hellbreeder*. In these the supposedly harmless and benevolent appearance of the clown conceals a people eating monster from hell or outer space. "Now, clowns are plain creepy and evil. We all know that." This is a line taken from an internet review of *Killer Klowns*, and similar comments are very common. There are also the representations of the crying clown, the sad clown, as a kind of paradoxical representation of a paradoxical figure. 'Clown' is an insult. Both criminals' and comedians' chosen professions are explained as resulting from an unhappy childhood. Clowns are evil or unimportant, something for kids, who are also considered somewhat unimportant. Semiotician Paul Bouissac thinks that the negative associations of clowns might be "repression of the transgressor," but perhaps the opposed representations are a result of the dialectical nature of the clown. Where a dialectical logic would allow the oppositions within the same figure, a unitary logic splits them into separate representations of benevolent clowns on the one hand and evil ones on the other. A recurring theme in the literature is the clown as something that must be suppressed, or that its function is bringing to sight something that must be suppressed, "the unthinkable and unspeakable" (Bouissac 1990: 199, see also Makarius 1970: 70). This could be a simple reflection of Western culture, since Wagner says that in Western culture the dialectic is suppressed – and the clowns are the very embodiment of dialectics.

Revenge is a theme in some evil clown narratives. In these cases the clown has not been taken seriously, has been laughed at in an inappropriate moment and this is revenged. In this way the clown resembles deities or mythical figures in more dialectical settings in its potential for both good and evil, and although often the response of laughing is correct and appropriate, a clown is met with on its own terms. This could also be interpreted as a recognition of the clowns ability to reverse ground and figure and cross the boundary between performer and audience.

A unitary single-principle interpretation of the dialectic is not necessarily evil. The tendency to emphasize the positive aspects of humor is the other option. Since the reversal involved in humor is a way to control relativization, humor can be seen as antidote to horror and evil, as purifying and healing. In this sense humor can transform bad things, and make them easier to bear. This is what is seen as the logic behind hospital clowns (Miller Van Blerkom 1995).

Another paradox of clowning is that misfortune is seen to create clowns, but clowning can create fortune out of misfortune. Humor is a way of inverting the mode of symbolization and reversing ground and figure at the very foundations of the trope. In terms of meaning and content, it is a way of positing new, inventive relations of reference. It is a way of stopping relativization, it separates the flows by creating a paradox, a border that mediates between the two flows. It creates both mediation and a boundary. It makes it possible to face relativization and engage with it, not in an antagonistic struggle, but in a dialectic. Relativization happens on different levels, the mixing of flows could be incest as opposed to a proper marriage, the dead coming alive as opposed to the alive becoming dead in an ordered way, the illness in a patient's body, unpleasant things in society, which could be racism to one and the presence of other ethnic groups to another person. Comic tropes mediate relativization the same way they mediate self and other or the sacred and profane.

Horror and humor can be looked at as tropes in terms of how they enable and restrict analogic flow. I argued that a humor trope poses a kind of double trope, with a double paradox. If funny is the unresolved tension between two mirror tropes, horror<sup>2</sup> is an opposite of humor. If humor plays

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2 Another possible opposite of humor is romance, which would be an example of auspicious relativization.

with relativization, the Chapayekas masquerade as it, and the “anything awful” of comedy is relativization kept at a length, horror is, without any ambiguity, relativization. Horror as a trope is rather the *lack* of tension and dialectics. Horror destroys the dialectic, collapses the mediation, and that spells doom. Humor mediates a boundary, and allows a border to be both kept and crossed. In horror that border is erased. Moctezuma Zamarrón (2008: 18) describes the *yorengo’i*, a werecoyote that came into being through incest. This creature lives in the monte but may enter towns, as well as take the shape of other animals and cause harm to any who see him. In this example of a horror trope from Yaqui lore several boundaries are crossed and flows relativized.

Analogic flow is both enabled and restricted by points of reference set up by symbolic action. Conventional points are by definition more available to use, while invention sets up new ones on the basis of the conventional ones. What are the implications of the points set up and relations drawn by horror tropes and how are humans implicated in these symbolizations? If the werewolf crosses or erases the line between humans and animals, this could mean that humans are going to be hunted and eaten like animals. Horror, as the coming together of two flows that should be kept apart, is relativization. If this flow isn't stopped or turned in another direction, it will keep relating more things that should be kept separate. The werewolves, vampires, and zombies keep infecting the living by their bite and instead of staying separate, the living and the dead become an undifferentiated mob of the undead. This is an uncontrolled reversal of the analogic flow that takes people from living to dead and keeps the dead and the living apart. The Mexican Day of the Dead is an example of a controlled reversal, where the dead and the living are joined. This reversal is also reversible, at the end the flows are separated again. A humor trope is a series of reversals.

A horror trope is a straightforward representation of relativization. In comparison, the clown carries in its figure different flows and by the figure-ground reversals it does by switching the mode of symbolization, the clown is also able to stop these flows. In humor disparate things are brought together, but their separateness is a condition of humor, as it is of play. Although clowns (like humor as a trope) bring disparate elements together, they are never completely blended. The clown is at the same time a representation of relativization and the means of stopping relativization. Humor posits a double trope, an imaginary that shares a point with another trope. This point of reference is simultaneously two relations. The point has to be the same, but the tropes that it would be a part of are opposed. In horror, the opposite tropes are collapsed into relativization. The similarity and difference of humor and

horror is in the relativization. The difference is that by being inherently dialectical, humor is also a guard against relativization. Perhaps clowns are not trusted because they are a kind of cage for the relativizing flow? What if the clown would choose not to reverse ground and figure, would stop being dialectical and would allow the flow of otherness, power, and chaos to contaminate the conventional universe? Clowns in their inventional mode threaten the conventional, at least by the mockery of values (Bouissac 1990).

In a society that differentiates and is based on a dialectical logic, the clowns are useful for threatening the conventional. The conventional must periodically be revitalized, and clowns keep things moving. Lutes says, after performing as a Pascola, that the satisfaction gained from Yaqui ritual is not "gained at the expense of the community norms, but is a product of the collective order that is cultivated and manipulated through ritual discipline..." (Lutes 1983: 83). In a society that takes difference for granted and sees convention and society as the realm of human effort, the threat clowns pose to convention is far more ominous. Here is an analogy to art in Western culture. Art is considered to have the ability challenge the system, to be a catalyst of change. Too much of this or in the wrong place, however, would be too much of a threat, or incomprehensible.

### **Clowns and tricksters, dialectical and ambiguous**

Although the Chapayeka is a specific figure existing in a specific context, he shares traits with other clowns and tricksters. The combination of differentiating and conventionalizing can be found in the figures and performances of other clowns besides the Chapayekas. All clowns mediate boundaries; they embody, enable and create dialectics. Although it has been recognized that clowns bring together opposite concepts, the Chapayekas and other clowns have usually been analysed from a point of view that seeks the articulation of a single principle at the expense of the dialectical logic. Although the ambiguity of clowns – created by the switching between convention and invention – has been recognized, the analytical solution has usually been to emphasize one side and downplay the other. One kind of attempt to disambiguate the clowns has looked at the conventional side of their performance, and invention has been ignored. This suppresses the dialectical nature of the analysed material and leads to oppositions being congealed into hierarchical dichotomies. When the ambiguity of the clowns has been accepted as a starting point, the emphasis has been on invention and the connection to convention has been severed. Then there is no solid ground for the inventions or the clowns and analysis itself becomes vague. As my study of

the Chapayekas shows, looking at meaning more holistically, taking into account the modes of symbolization and the ways of creating tropes in addition to the contexts and contents of clowning provides a new way of looking at clowns and what they do in a specific context.

A reading of the literature indicates that it is common for clowns to combine convention and differentiation. It is usually the conventional side that is described in more detail, but differentiation is present in the imitation, improvisation and interaction with the people and their unique situations. The clowns engage with the spectators, may speak of things that have happened recently in the community, and make self-referential comments. (see, for example, Bricker 1973: 156; Laski 1959: 14; Simmons 1978: 280) To Bouissac, the performances of circus clowns are metacultural texts, which must be varied more to suit different contexts than other circus acts. "Clown tradition is not a set of ready-made tricks but a set of rules that operates on the constitutive rules of the contextual culture." (Bouissac 1976: 169).

Clowns appear in places where a dialectical logic is acceptable or necessary. Clowns usually appear in conventionalizing contexts, such as rituals, circuses, and courts. In different places there are very specific kinds of clowns used consistently in specific contexts: for example, the indigenous North American ritual clowns are related to the deities and cosmological cycles; many are part of calendar rituals (see, for example, Christen 1998, Hieb 1972, Laski 1959, Simmons 1978). In the Pacific, clowns in rituals mediate kingroups and hierarchy (Mitchell 1992). In Europe, clowns are often connected to politics. In Asia many forms of theater include clowns, who often comment on social hierarchies (see for example, Christen 1998: 30, 44-45, 75-77; Peacock 1978). It seems all clowns are associated with mediating, simultaneously crossing and guarding boundaries through figure-ground reversals. Clowns enable and create dialectics. They are able to relate opposed flows and points of reference without their becoming relativized.

In Yaqui Christianity or Hopi religion the relation between humans and spirits is conceived of dialectically. Tricksters and clowns mediate the relation. There have been very few figures in mainstream Christianity that could be called tricksters, but politics has had its court jesters and is the free range of stand-up comedians. This seems to be the realm in Western culture where clowns and humor are allowed and needed. Politics is seen as the interaction of different groups, the people and the government, different parties, and so on. These are not intended to become relativized; the distinctions should be kept, but there should be a reciprocal, interactive relation between the groups.

Even though the clown is often considered to be a universal type, the figure is notoriously hard to pin down. Some writers have suggested that the category of clown or trickster is an artifact of the analyst and contains figures really too different to be compared (see Beidelman 1980). Others note that there are important differences between clowns, but nevertheless see enough common ground in the combination of contradictory elements and use of humor to proceed with analysis. (see Hieb 1977; Babcock 1984; Handelman 1990). It seems the one characteristic the authors can agree on is that clowns and tricksters are thoroughly ambiguous and open to literally any interpretation. Like Paul Radin says of the trickster, they are "everything to every man." (Radin 1956: 169). "Whatever predicate we use to describe [the clown], the opposite can also be said, and with equal right." (Zucker 1967: 308-9). While the ambiguity has often made analysis problematic, it has provided a way of separating the clown from other figures. Ambiguity and contradiction is the special domain of the clown, who presents contradictions while other performers are more likely to resolve them (Handelman 1990).

As cultural figures, clowns and tricksters are very similar. The basic difference between clowns and tricksters is that clowns are performed figures and tricksters exist in narratives. This division between clowns and tricksters is, of course, not absolute, as some figures exist both in myths and performance. However, of the two the trickster has received far more attention. While there is a sustained scholarly discussion of the trickster, the clown has been written about rather sporadically, and there is little engagement between the texts. Both are associated with borders, playfulness, ambiguity, humor, and paradox. Like clowns, different tricksters exhibit different traits, some are harmless and delightful, while others may be dangerous and powerful. The trickster deceives, plays tricks and inverts situations. He is a mediator, a messenger and/or imitator of the gods, a both sacred and lewd bricoleur. (Hynes 1993: 34).

Tricksters are often depicted as animals, who nevertheless speak and reason like humans. Sometimes their form and being is ambiguous, like the Winnebago trickster who "possesses no well-defined and fixed form" (Radin 1956: x). Their appearance can be double, motley, unformed, or disguised, they may be capable of shapeshifting, and their age or sex is indeterminate (Babcock 1975: 159-160). Tricksters are associated with borders, crossroads, and thresholds, he is moving, on the road, inbetween. "In short, trickster is a boundary crosser," and, like the clown, he also creates and guards borders (Hyde 1998: 7). He mediates between different beings and different worlds (Babcock 1975, Hyde 1998). Barbara Babcock (1975: 176) points out that water,

crossing it, entering it, and so on, figures in all the episodes described in Radin's book on the Winnebago trickster. Waterways and mirrors are, of course, also routes, often linked to the underworld. Tricksters often violate temporal and spatial distinctions in the myths. (ibid. 154).

Tricksters often reflect cultural patterns in a distorted form. Scale, like that of libido or appetite, is often exaggerated. Usually there is no procreation despite the abundance of sexual relations, and the kin relations portrayed in the stories are somehow unusual. In the stories the tricksters usually try to get around some natural or cultural law, often fail, but are never completely destroyed. Tricksters are themselves often destructive, but they are also associated with the creation of the world and bringing many useful things to humans, such as fire – or lies (Hyde 1998). Because of their creativity and the way they seek to get around some boundary or obstacle that would stop normal beings, tricksters have been associated with thinking, consciousness, and providing alternative solutions. Radin calls the trickster "an archaic *speculum mentis*... an attempt by man to solve his problems inward and outward..." (Radin 1956: x). The trickster is also associated with the awakening of consciousness, differentiating of the previously undifferentiated (ibid. 133-4). This, of course, can also be articulated as the making of boundaries.

The trickster tales themselves reflect many of the attributes of the trickster. They are also difficult to classify. Babcock poses the idea that the ability of the tales to confound all classification is embedded in the structure of the narrative. Similar functions are attributed to the telling of trickster tales as to clowns. Babcock puts forth six basic propositions for the tales – entertainment, explanation, sublimation, evaluative, reflective, and *communitas* creating. (Babcock 1975: 182-185). Hynes says the tales are said to be deeply satisfying entertainment, ritual vents for social frustrations, and that they reaffirm the belief system (Hynes 1993: 202).

These are similar to the explanations given to clowns, and similarly vague. A more viable solution is to consider the figures and the performances, including the telling of trickster tales, as both conventionalizing and differentiating and consider the switches as figure-ground reversals. The description of the figure of the trickster is very similar to the clown, and so are the tropes created by the action of the trickster. The same mix of conventionalization and differentiation is certainly present in trickster stories as in clown performance, even if the narrative has been entextualized. The tricksters are, like the clowns, tied to both the moral and conventional aspect of culture, and they are constantly trying to differentiate themselves, and make themselves powerful in relation to convention. Many of the tales describe

something conventional, such as hunting or going on the warpath, but the trickster begins to differentiate to make himself more powerful. Sometimes he learns a powerful action, such as throwing his eyes up to the trees to see further, or making food by magic, but instead of properly conventionalizing and correctly following the model he has been given, trickster tries to make himself even more powerful by differentiating. If he has been told to only take his eyes out four times, he will go for the fifth. At the beginning of the tale the trickster is set up as a trickster and the conventional situation is set up which the trickster observes or initiates ("coyote was hunting"). Then the trickster introduces an inventive twist, which entails a figure-ground reversal. This usually gets him into trouble, which then either results in the conventional situation that exists in the present ("and this is why death exists," or "since then coyote has a long tail") or the trickster uses convention, sometimes the model he has learned, to adjust the situation so it is bearable (having lost his own eyes, the coyote borrows a small one from a mouse and a big one from a buffalo). The invention and counterinvention of the controlling and motivating contexts are particularly clear in trickster tales. When the trickster wants to differentiate, convention creeps up and stops his attempt to become powerful. When he attempts to conventionalize, the particularities of the situation are there to hinder him. This also happens in the Yaqui stories of St. Peter and Jesus. St. Peter tries to revive the dead as Jesus does, but is not able to do so on his own. Some trickster tales end in the death of the trickster, which collapses the mediation between the poles of convention and invention. Of course, in the next tale, he lives again.

### **Boundaries: mediation and transgression**

Clowns and tricksters are often characterized as mediators, beings that cross, create, and guard borders. Handelman (1990: 242) says there is a boundary within the clown figure itself created by its combination of contradictory traits. Boundaries and borders are not, however, simple terms. "The notion of "boundary" is as multivocal and polyvalent (and as loosely used) as "marginal"" (Babcock 1975: 150). If borders are "multivocal and polyvalent" they need to be represented (and manipulated) by figures that are just that. It is not that we have clowns who are then associated with borders, we need boundaries (to have differences, and dialectical relations, to have meaning) and in a situation where there is both a need to keep those borders *and* a need for them to be crossed, in short, a need for dialectical mediation, there are clowns, tricksters, and jokes. A dialectic is another way of describing a boundary. A dialectic has two opposed poles, which are separated, yet there



is a relation between them. The boundary is and is not a part of or the same as the things it separates, yet it is also what joins them. This is what a dialectical relation does; it brings things into a relation, but does not make them the same. In this sense it is opposed to relativization, that does make things the same by blurring the distinction. I argue, that like the Chapayekas, other clowns mediate mediation by representing relativization on the level of trope as metaphor and guarding against the relativization of the trope and the means of its expression on the next level of meaning.

Clowns and tricksters are generally associated with transgression, sacredness, and profanity. These are, however, considered very differently by different writers. Handelman (1990: 248) says clowns erase the difference between sacred and profane. Bouissac (1990) says that circus clowns profane the sacred by making skillful semiotic substitutions. For Laura Makarius the most important function for tricksters—and clowns as their “earthly counterparts”—is as transgressors, and specifically as breakers of the blood taboo (1970: 46). She holds that the use of blood or representations of blood by ritual clowns is common. According to her, they re-enact the role of magician who breaks the blood taboo for the benefit of the group. At the same time, the clown is associated with non-violence. The Chapayekas actually fit this pattern as they take the part of Judas and participate in the crucifixion, although it is Pilate who actually spills the blood of Jesus. Nevertheless, Makarius follows along similar lines as the previous authors who spoke of comic relief when she concludes that clowns “owe their existence solely to the need of evoking something which at the same time must be suppressed” (1970: 70). Evoking something that also must be suppressed could be articulated as the need for a mediation of relativization.

Transgression is also a means to power. Dirt is connected to transgression as the crossing of moral boundaries. “Dirt is matter out of place,” it implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order (Douglas 1994: 50). The affinity between dirt, power, and clowns has been noted by Handelman (1990: 248) and Makarius (1970: 66) in connection to blood. Clowns and tricksters are “messy,” as Barbara Babcock says. Their beneficence results from the breaking of taboos and rules. Because of his transgressions, the trickster is polluting and has to remain marginal. (Babcock 1975: 148). From the point of view of the European missionaries and even anthropologists, clowns were “out of place” in ritual in the first place (Tedlock 1975: 114-115). Seeing clowns as polluting can be also seen as a fear of the mixing of categories. If dirt implies set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order, this is also an apt description of clowning, the

setting up of convention and an inventive taking advantage of that convention. However, the ordered relations are not indicative of a system that exists as a given and is brought out by acts of transgression, they are just as much a product of symbolic action. Yaqui ritual begins with conventionalizing, which sets up an order to be contravened.

I have argued that switching between modes of symbolization is what allows the Chapayekas to cross borders and that these switches are also figure-ground reversals that invert the clowns' relations to context. Handelman claims that the clown is, to a degree, autonomous of its context. He says the clown has a different relation to, and therefore a different effect on, context than certain other types, such as those Handelman calls "Prophet" or "Saviour" types. (1990: 245). While other figures have a more straightforward relation to their context, and pose only one reality at a time, so to say, the clown "moves between alternative realities without solving the paradoxes of transition... and without evoking a metamessage like 'this is play'." This way the clown dissolves the absolutism of the rigid boundaries. (Handelman 1990: 243, 246).

If the clown embodies transition and boundaries in its figure, the clown doesn't so much move between different realities but is the mediation between them, and same goes for boundaries. They are not dissolved; the boundary stays intact but is mediated. The 'moving between different realities' is actually a movement from one mode of symbolization to the other, a reversal of the dialectic. The clowns' relation to the context of their performance is altered by the switches between modes that are also figure-ground reversals. The conventionalizing mode sets up the performance context, circus, ritual, or whatever, as discrete and apart as a bounded conventional trope. When this is used as the ground for a differentiating symbolization, the boundary that has been created between the context of performance and the rest of the world is mediated, and clowns can refer to things outside the performance context and engage the spectators in interaction. This is how the special power of the clowns is created and how they really are boundary-crossers. They open up a dialectic between the realms divided by a boundary by becoming that boundary and mediating it by periodical reversals.

### **Monologic interpretations of a dialogic figure**

In some analyses of clowns, the focus has been on explaining the serious effects of clown performance (see, for example, Crumrine 1969, Hieb 1972, Parsons and Beals 1934). For instance, Arden R. King (1977) separates the different aspects of the clown's role into humorous and non-humorous which

alternate. King sees the non-humorous side of performance as efficacious, and the humor as offering protection for the clown from the consequences his non-humorous actions. According to King, humorousness is not discussed much because anyone can be humorous, but the clown alone has “potential for the elicitation of nonorder – the creation of another way of human *being*” (King 1977: 147, emphasis in the original). The clown has potential to both destroy and affirm or create structure. The humor, the “retreat into buffoonery” (ibid. 144), which insures the clown against the consequences of his own behavior, happens when “the limits are secure and the structure is neither in need nor danger of replacement” (ibid. 147).

Sometimes the ambiguity is accepted as an important characteristic. Mikhail Bakhtin, who does make distinctions between humor and the comic in different times and places, says that the festive laughter found in carnivals of the Middle Ages is ambivalent, simultaneously joyful and mocking (Bakhtin 1984: 11-12). This ambivalence gives laughter a regenerative power (ibid. 38). Wolfgang Zucker says the clown is the “expression of the absurdity and paradox of the human existence” (Zucker 1967: 308). Radin says:

“The symbol which Trickster embodies is not a static one. It contains within itself the promise of differentiation, the promise of god and man. For this reason every generation occupies itself with interpreting Trickster anew. No generation understands him fully but no generation can do without him. Each had to include him... despite the fact that it realized he did not fit properly into any of them for he represents not only the undifferentiated and distant past but likewise the undifferentiated present within every individual. This constitutes his universal and persistent attraction. And so he became and remained everything to every man – god, animal, human being, hero, buffoon, he who was before good and evil, denier, affirmer, destroyer and creator. If we laugh at him, he grins at us. What happens to him happens to us.” (1956: 168-9).

Babcock describes the trickster as a baffling figure, anomalous and polluting. “Trickster has the ability to live interstitially, to confuse and to escape the structures of society and the order of cultural things” (1975: 148). Babcock comes close to my argument of the clown as the creator of dialectics when she says, “dialogic phenomena such as tricksters... are... resistant to monological interpretation... scholars have persisted in trying to explain away this paradoxical coincidence of opposites.” She cites Makarius and agrees with her that obscuring trickster’s dialogues with functional monologues does not work. (ibid. 160). Babcock quotes Koestler: bisociation, the juxtaposition of two

or more incompatible frames of reference, is fundamental to creativity (ibid. 184). She says clowning has not been taken seriously, as it should be, as a structure of truth and reality; it offers “realities of decreation” and poses hypothetical and subjunctive modes of culture (Babcock 1984: 103). Babcock (ibid. 114) also explores themes of “paradoxical metacommentary,” where clowning makes contradictory statements on its context, and how the detachment and double entendre of clown performance can bring insight into meanings. Clowning reflects reality in a way that rational thought cannot, it reveals the arbitrary, constructed nature of the world. Through the use of opposites and reversals, for Babcock, clowns are mediators par excellence who organize the world through their performance.

Some of these thoughts, such as clowning revealing the world as constructed, are reflected in other texts as well. At the same time, there is little discussion of what this means and how clowns organize the world. No one seems to be really able to get away from the monologic interpretations and the efforts to reduce the dialectic to the articulation of a single principle. I argue that these are largely the result of seeing the clown performance or the trickster tales in terms of one mode of symbolization. If they are expected to be conventionalizing, acting in terms of a conventional model, the trickery and playfulness is a problem, and the figure may even be seen as a failure: for example, in the studies of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the ambiguity of the trickster was often seen as the result of an inability on the part of the storymakers to tell the difference. Another version of the conventionalizing analysis is to say that the figure reflects correct behavior and forms of culture by presenting its opposite. Yet another version attributes the more successful creative actions of the trickster, such as bringing fire to people, to another kind of figure, the culture hero. The trickster has been thought to be a combination of two figures, or a transitional stage in the evolution of a figure. (Babcock 1975: 162). It seems it is hard to accept that a trickster can do many things; Hyde says that although many indigenous names for trickster figures also refer to trickery, “the connotations of ‘trickster’ [are] too limited for the scope of activities ascribed to this character.” He notes that the suggested form “Trickster-Transformer-Culture Hero” is more apt. (Hyde 1998: 7).

Focusing on the conventionalizing makes the differentiating in the form of clowning unimportant or incomprehensible, but accepting the clown or trickster as a differentiating figure brings another kind of problem: too many open possibilities and the clowning remains incomprehensible. An example is provided by the claim that clowns and tricksters do not provide specific meanings, but the possibility of meaningfulness: “The trickster shows us a way

to see the world by opening our minds to the spontaneous transformations of a reality that is always open and creative.” (Doueiri 1993: 200). Tricksters are then seen as psychic explorers and adventurers and agents of creativity who transcend the constrictions of monoculturality – and show how every construct is constructed – the trickster dissolves the order of things in the depth of the open-ended metaplay of life. (Hynes 1993: 202). “He embodies all possibilities and is Paradox personified” (Babcock 1975: 148). Trickster has prophetic insight and reveals a hidden plenitude (Hyde 1998: 290). In this view, the power and playfulness of the figure is foregrounded, but it is no longer tied to its cultural context, the conventional and the moral. The figure becomes a kind of detached free floating promise of meaning, which is – paradoxically? – not very meaningful.

Focusing on only one aspect of the clown or trickster leaves many things unexplained. Looked at as a dialectic, the two poles of clown performance serve as figure and ground for each other, one limits and thus enables the other. Periodic differentiation makes the clowns stronger in their conventional mode and conventionalization makes the invention meaningful. Both are necessary for the performance, and both must be considered in analysis.

### **The efficacy and agency of clowns**

Clowns are associated with transformation. Whether they cause a transformation, or index it, depends on the trope. Perhaps humor is always an exercise of agency in its built-in ability to reverse ground and figure, shift the frame and point of view and turn to power-compelling differentiation. Irony has been called “the trope of indirection” (Fernandez 2001: 87). Irony and humor in many contexts also have a built in escape in the sense that because they state two things at the same time, either meaning, or both, can be denied. This allows the making of indirect statements. The clown, like the court jester, is relatively marginal; paradoxically it is the lack of open acknowledgement of their power that allows them to yield power.

In most texts the contradictory and paradoxical nature of clowns is linked to the ability to offer alternatives as a sort of intellectual exercise, but Handelman sees it as a source of performative power and an integral part of the effectiveness of the total ritual in which the clown appears. He says clown types are affined with process, boundary, and transition, and opposed to deity figures and essentialist versions of structure. Handelman argues that clowns only appear in certain kinds of events—which he calls ‘modelling’—that leave room for proposing new interpretations of reality. Furthermore, the clown

appears in very specific phases of events, usually signifying a shift or change in the process of the event. As a self-reflexive figure, the clown is able to index the phases in the process of the event, and since the clown is an unstable figure in transition, it can enable the transformation of events. (1990: 264-5). This can be linked to the often grotesque forms or actions of clowns, in a similar vein as Bakhtin, who associates images of the grotesque with transformation, "an as yet unfinished metamorphosis... death and birth, growth and becoming (Bakhtin 1984: 24).

Many ritual clowns are efficacious through evoking and provoking emotion. Surprisingly few researchers have considered the clown's ability to provoke emotion. Bouissac (1990) and Tedlock (1975) see it as an important part of the efficacy of clowning. Barbara Tedlock (1975) considers the different meanings laughter has on different occasions. She describes how among the Inuit hosts try to make their visitors laugh by means of a clowning performance. Visitors resist as long as they can, as when they finally do laugh, they are at the mercy of the host and must agree to any demands they make. Tedlock says that as a healer the clown is opposed to the shaman, parodying the shaman in performance but with many of the same powers, such as providing a translation of the knowledge of another reality. The contrary action that inverts everyday behavior "opens" people to immediate experience by laughter or shock so that it is "easier for the power to come to them" (1975: 106, 107).

Mary Douglas points out that in many cases, the joking kin are responsible for performing the necessary rites of purification for transgressors, or those in mourning. She finds that joking has a cathartic effect. As a kind of "anti-rite" it offers access to anti-structure, where alternatives to the dominant structure can be found. (Douglas 1968: 372-3). This is similar to Turner's ideas of liminality and moments of *communitas* and anti-structure providing a way to manipulate structure. The same can be articulated as the dialectic of invention and convention. Joking as a shift into the differentiating mode can be used to reframe the conventional. If differentiation makes an individual powerful in relation to the conventional, it is a way to be freed of some aspect of convention. 'Comic relief' has come up in many studies on clowns, but it has mostly been offered as an unexamined explanation (Painter 1985: 235), or refuted as complete nonsense (Handelman 1990: 237). Tedlock, however, offers a different view when she says the clowns' seeming disrespect or lack of propriety brings about a freedom from accepted norms and ways of behavior which is also freedom from conventional ways of thinking, fears and tensions. This release can be healing. "Mystical liberation from ultimate cosmic fears

brings with it a liberation from conventional notions of what is dangerous or sacred" (Tedlock 195: 108). Tedlock ties 'relief' and 'release' to emic perceptions of the efficacy of the ritual performance of the clowns: release from worry promotes health and balance in an individual as well as the society. There is no necessary return to the state of anxiety. This makes Tedlock's approach different to earlier ideas that linked the idea of release to suppressed psychological tendencies which never really go away. Ultimately the efficacy and agency of clowns are enabled and limited by the dialectic of convention and invention in each specific trope. A clown can heal, a comic can be a catalyst for social change, if these are made possible in the larger context of culture, tropes and symbolization.

### **Conclusions: The clown as a trope of meaning**

Clowns and humor are inherently dialectical. Modern Western science and religion are more inclined to a unitary logic, which seeks to articulate a single principle to order things. The modern Western world view, its conceptions of good and evil, and the hierarchical evaluation of comedy and humor as unimportant have resulted in clowning being often ignored, misunderstood, and undervalued. In the Western world view rooted in a dichotomy between good and evil, clowns are also seen as being firmly one or the other.

In the indigenous Mexican systems the logic of "evil is funny" is a way of creating dialectics, using representations of relativization to motivate tropes, engaging good with evil, to ultimately guard against relativization and retain the meaningful oppositions. The Western "funny is evil" is a kind of reverse logic that happens when the whole thing is sought to be organized by a single principle. It is not enough to say that the Chapayekas are beyond good and evil or both at the same time. There is a profound difference between the cosmology that forms the context of the anthropologists' statements – that the Chapayekas represent evil and the Easter ritual is the triumph of good over evil – and the cosmology in which the ritual actually occurs. In both the clown is associated with the devil, but in very different ways. Evil itself is conceptualized differently, on one hand as the absolute opposite of good to be destroyed, and on the other as the dialectical opposite of good in a system, where good and evil are mutually defined by one another. Both are necessary in the annual cycle of death and rebirth. More importantly, the alternation of opposed powers is necessary.

Humor can be used for specific ends in specific situations. Humor can be cutting, hostile, liberating, healing, good, or bad depending on one's point

of view and relative situation to the points of reference being evoked. Analysis has seized upon all of the possibilities at one time or another, but usually only one at a time. To give any sort of general view, however, analysis must go deeper and look at how tropes are made. What is remarkable about humor is the potential for dialectical mediation, which makes it possible to engage with relativization, create representations of it and also stop it through reversals.

In recent views of communication, learning, and memory, the processes are seen to be much more creative than a mechanic storing of information. In a rather similar way to artists (and clowns!) the brain explores possibilities, tests its own creations and can create experience. (Smith 1985 quoted in Kersenboom 2005: 74). If all meaning, perception, and thinking are made possible by dialectics between different poles and the ground-figure reversals of these dialectics, then the clown, as an embodiment of dialectics, really is a trope of meaning itself as a general phenomenon. "To show how trope organizes culture is to show how paradox does, and paradox has functioned in modern life...merely as a means of *stopping* conventional procedures, jolting them into self-consciousness" (Wagner 1986: x-xi).

This, in effect, is how clowns have been seen as well. It seems that when linear and monologic scholarship is applied to the paradoxical and ambiguous tricksters and clowns, in the intent to suppress the dialectic in order to articulate a single principle one of two things happens. One option is to force the clowns into a single mold, emphasizing one trait or effect over the others, which distorts the figure. The other option accepts the ambiguity, but there is a curious effect of relativization: the scholarship is confounded and becomes vague and ambiguous itself. However, many of the things said by previous authors can be rearticulated in terms of a more dialectical model. My analysis picks up on many themes already present in earlier research; the clown as a mediator and boundary crosser that makes creative use of conventional material. That clown performance has different aspects has been recognized before, but a more dialectical view recognizes the inverted relation between these modes, their different effects as opposed modes of symbolization, and sees the alternation between modes itself as an important aspect of clowns. The dialectical model makes it possible to accept the fundamental ambiguity of the figure and still say something meaningful about clowns on different levels, about the fundamental means of creating the tropes and how that organizes meaning, and the content in terms of the particular occasion. Clowning and joking are means of creating dialectics, therefore mediating boundaries, and they invert the mode of symbolization, therefore guarding against relativization. They also motivate tropes through representations of



relativization. As a figure that enables dialectics by doing reversals and providing the opposite pole, the clown is not meant to be understood in itself, but as a kind of zero; nothing in itself, but indispensable for certain symbolic actions. Although the prototypical clowns that combine playfulness, trickery, contradiction and paradox are the best examples, these figures are the essential form of tropes that are present and important in many aspects of culture, whether as informal spontaneous joking or non-comic chaotic figures.

## Conclusions: Continuity, Change, and Meaning

All meaningful action, perception, thought, and expression is created through the dialectic of invention and convention. Depending on the mode, one or the other is the focus, the controlling context and the other is counterinvented as the motivating context. The dialectical tension between points of reference may stop existing or become diluted due to relativization. This means that the controlling context takes on the characteristics of the controlled, motivating context and vice versa. "Contexts that are continually articulated together tend to permeate one another and thus relativize one another" (ibid. 58). Highly relativized controls lead to the invalidation of the action, as it aligns the control with the resistance (ibid. 55). This tendency can only be counteracted by inverting one's mode of action and reinventing the ordinary controls in terms of novel circumstances. The conventional distinction of what is innate and artificial is restored or sustained by changing the content of the cultural contexts. Collectivizing controls are, then, recreated by differentiation, deliberate invention, and in inverse systems the differentiating controls are recreated by acts of collectivization. Wagner (1981: 58-59) says that symbols are "used up;" meaning must be continually reinvented. New symbolic articulations must be forged to retain the orientation that makes meaning itself possible.

The tendency towards relativization can be counteracted by inverting one's mode of action and reinventing the ordinary controls in terms of novel circumstances. The Chapayekas recreate the controls and "reinvent meaning" by differentiating within the collectivizing mode of the ritual. They provide new symbolic articulations that prevent the figure from being "used up." Because of the dialectic relation with the other ceremonial groups, as the Chapayekas reinvent themselves, the opposite groups are revitalized as well. Joking and other forms of humor are the most accessible way to invert controls. Without the clowns, the differences between the ceremonial groups might fade, and they would all become so many Yaqui ritual performers, undistinguished from each other. The Chapayekas keep the ritual vital and meaningful by providing new content. This way they also guard against the relativization of the entire ritual.

The holistic view of meaning makes it possible to see why and how the ritual really plays an important part in the continuity of culture, how the Christian deities have been reinvented in terms of Yaqui cosmology, and the way the Chapayekas provide a powerful counterpart to Jesus in their conventional aspect and keep the opposition intact through invention and

differentiation. The dialectic of invention and convention is present in all aspects and levels of meaning. Conventions are invented and reinvented on the basis of previous tropes; human beings invent and reinvent themselves in the process. European Jesuit missionaries brought their conventional tropes to the New world; having been reinterpreted and reinvented according to Yaqui conventions, as part of Yaqui religion and ritual they now provide the conventional pole of Yaqui life that serves as the basis for the invention and differentiation of every-day life. Clowns, Pascolas in the deer dance and Chapayekas at Easter, create a dialectic of invention and convention within Yaqui ritual. The two kinds of performances have different aims and outcomes. Through the conventional side of their performance, the Chapayekas provide a cosmological counterpart to Jesus. By differentiating, they tap the power of otherness. It is also important to consider the effects of alternating between these modes as figure-ground reversals. By switching between the two modes, they bring the power tapped by differentiation into the conventions of the ritual and revitalize the entire ritual.

Clowns embody and create dialectics to mediate boundaries and guard against relativization. All humor does this; clowns are a conventional part of certain cultural contexts where dialectical mediation is called for. The Chapayekas are both similar to and different from the other clown and trickster figures of the Yaquis, the Pascola and St. Peter, who also combine two modes of symbolization, switch between them and offer dialectical mediation, crossing boundaries while still keeping them intact. Both clown figures, the Chapayekas and the Pascolas, mediate the cycle of death and rebirth of a deity figure, the ritual and its context, and tap the power of other figures. The differences between the two clowns are best approached through different relations to the masks, which give clues to the kinds of power and beings they mediate. The mask of the Chapayeka is more powerful, so much so as to have its own agency, and must be kept distinct from the performer. The Pascola, whose separation from his mask is not as necessary, may also use the power of the monte or the power of the devil for himself, while the Chapayeka cannot; the performer must protect himself from the power inherent in the mask. Although this power when properly channeled is beneficial for the ritual and the community, unmediated contact with the Chapayeka mask would be extremely dangerous. The burning and remaking of the Chapayeka masks is an important part of the figure's own cycle of death and rebirth.

Previous studies have aimed at the interpretation of the Easter ritual as a collection of microcosmic symbols, and interpretation has consisted of looking for the meaning of each individual symbol extracted from the flow.

The Christian aspect has been pretty much taken for granted as known and analysis mostly has focused on the aspects deemed indigenous. When the ritual has been looked at as a whole, it has been presented as a process, where one phase follows the next, more “enacted from a program” than motivated through internal oppositions. Oppositions have been interpreted as structural, creating categories, rather than dynamic and creating dialectics (see, for example, Olavarria 2003). Spicer notes that each symbol has somewhat different associations in different situations. For example, he says that flowers constitute the most important “realm of meaning” and goes on to describe the different contexts they appear in and the associations they have. Spicer says this is what would have to be done for all the symbols to interpret the Easter ritual but that “it would require volumes to describe all the realms of meaning and relate all their symbols together.” (Spicer 1980: 86-88).

Nor would any number of volumes ever be enough. My study suggests that as an analytical approach, bringing the symbols together is better than taking them apart. The obviation sequence takes care of the ordering, presenting, and disposing of metaphors – the different associations of different situations. Focusing on the ritual images themselves, and not the interpretations they can be given, has brought out new aspects of the Easter ritual. Any number of abstractions could be found in the imagery, “all are obviated in its working out” (Wagner 1992: 213). Looking at the ritual as a trope and in its obviation sequence brings out the internal relations of it and shows how the oppositions lead from one event to the next. The events are motivated by the alternation of powers; the ritual is dynamic in itself. In comparison to the biblical trope where Judas has a very small role, the Chapayekas as Judas balance the whole thing out by offering a counterpart to Jesus, thus creating a dialectic that keeps the cycles rolling. In the sequence of the Easter ritual, the obviations and reversals are also the mutual motivation and creative foundation of the different ceremonial groups. The trope of Jesus is formed against the trope of the Chapayekas, and vice versa. There is no final resolution, and no need for one. The tropes set each other up, the cycles follow from each other and the flow never ends. “Obviation is carried forth by the analogic flow it elicits, not by the needs or interests of individuals or collectivities, or by bio- or socioenergetics...” (ibid. 69).

In the specific case of the Yaqui ritual the clowns answer the question of how an unchanging “text” can stay meaningful in a changing context. The continuity of Yaqui ritual – and the associated continuity of Yaqui culture – is created by two conditions. The pervasiveness of the dialectical logic that defines principles, concepts, and beings against each other is one. The other is

the built-in aspect of change, the invention and differentiation of the Chapayekas. Invention and convention, change and continuity, are set against each other as dialectics, to define and provide controls for each other. The power of the Easter ritual is not a case of interpretation of the ritual symbols, but resides in the way the trope is set up in itself. The extreme continuity is made possible by the incorporation of extreme change in the form of the Chapayekas. The combination of continuity and change, convention and invention, is what gives the Easter ritual a never-ending potential to fit a variety of contexts on one hand and to recreate the conventions of Yaqui culture in those contexts on the other hand. Rather than extensively describe the relation of the ritual images to the situation in Cócorit in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, I have aimed to discern how the ritual as a trope is related to the continuity of culture and cosmology more generally. It is the combination of convention and invention that I think is key to the ritual and that has kept it meaningful through decades and probably centuries across a variety of political and social situations in both Mexico and the USA.

There are different levels of trope within the general scheme of meaning. The Chapayekas participate in the ritual as a trope and they also mediate the ritual as a trope to its relative micro and macrocosms. In the holistic view of meaning the context does not exist as apart and self-evident, but is created as a part of the dialectics of meaning. This view of meaning makes it possible to see context as more than unreadable ground or a collection of equal co-texts, and by taking this into consideration, I have been able to explain why and how the clown has a different relation to context, as has been noted in previous studies (see Handelman 1990). Even if the macrocosmic context is thought of as beyond human control, part of the way things are, it is still a product of convention, invention, and the counterinvention of symbolization. The Easter ritual can be seen as a dialectic mediating between the conventions of Yaqui culture and the larger world of both cosmological and earthly powers. The reversibility of the dialectics means that either image, as individual, differentiated fact, or convention can be obviated, made to serve as the ground for the other.

"The obviation of image, at the macrocosmic pole, resolves itself in the formation of a conventional (or moral) metaphor relating the factual and the collective; the obviation of convention, at the microcosmic pole, resolves itself in the formation of an individuating metaphor relating the factual and the collective." (Wagner 1986: 31).

Both happen in the Easter ritual. The conventional symbolizations of the ritual obviate image; the Chapayekas obviate convention when they

differentiate. The Easter ritual brings all the ceremonial societies and deities together and this makes it a core trope of the cosmology. Through the enaction of the trope, a dialectical and dynamic cosmology of different powers is counterinvented as the meaningful context. The Yaqui Easter ritual is meaningful as a concrete macrocosm of abstract cosmological principles, but also as microcosmic coding of powerful macrocosmic powers and figures, such as the ones represented in Chapayeka masks, or the deities represented in figures.

Previous analyses of the Chapayekas as well as other clown and trickster figures have tended to emphasize one aspect or another, to try to explain away the ambiguity and paradox of the figures. They have been seen as completely good or completely evil, as funny and harmless beings that provide comic relief from serious and therefore tedious but important aspects of life, or as serious ritual specialists, whose seriousness is obscured by the unimportant clowning for some unfathomable reason. The analyses that accept the ambiguity of the figure as a starting point do not fare much better as they tend to portray clowns and tricksters as only differentiating – as promises of endless founts of meaning that are not anchored in any meaningful way to the cultural and social contexts in which they appear. Comic tropes are seen as a way of saying anything and everything at the same time and thus lose their ability to say something specific. My analysis shows that it is possible to do justice to the opposed aspects of the figure by taking into account the different foundations and contextual effects of the different modes of symbolization. Clowns and tricksters are characterized by their alternation between invention and convention, and this is what connects them to the collective and moral aspect of culture on the one hand, and makes them unpredictable and powerful on the other. Clowns *are* boundaries, and all the paradoxical mediation that entails. They relate opposed flows or points of reference at necessary moments while still keeping distinctions intact. The Chapayekas are the boundaries between the self and other, microcosm and macrocosm, sacred and profane, the Fariseos and the church group. There is no such thing as “mere clowns.” As the embodiment of reversible dialectics, the clown in itself constitutes a trope of meaning.

## Glossary

- Angelitos** – “little angels,” children who perform as angels in the Easter ritual. Part of the church group.
- Anía** – a realm or world
- Caballeros** – “the cavalry,” a ceremonial group in the Easter ritual, first siding with the Fariseos, then switch over to the church group.
- Cabo** – “corporal,” members of the Fariseos. Men who have a vow to perform as Chapayekas may perform as Cabos before they’re married.
- Cabecera** – first town
- Cantora** – women who sing during rituals. Part of the church group.
- Cargo** – a specific role in ritual, entailing certain responsibilities
- Chapayeka** – masked performers, who represent Judas and the Roman soldiers in the Easter ritual. Chapayeka means “long-nosed” or “big-nosed.”
- Charro** – Mexican cowboy
- Cholo** – delinquent, criminal
- Church group** – the ceremonial group that is associated with the Christian deities.
- Clapper** – a wooden board with a metal hinge that makes a clapping sound. Used at Easter in the Chapayeka relays.
- Conty** – name of the part of town where the Yaqui church is located in Córorit as it appears on maps.
- Curandero** – traditional healer
- The eight original towns** – “los ocho pueblos” the eight towns in Sonora founded by the Jesuit missionaries.
- Encuentro** – part of the ritual that represents the resurrection of Jesus, the meeting of Mary Magdalen and John the Baptist.
- Enramada** – a structure built from branches, generally has three walls and a roof.
- Fariseos** – a ceremonial group in the Easter ceremony, set against the Christian deities. Includes the Chapayekas, Cabos, Fariseo officers, and Pilate.
- Feria** – a fair, signifying rides, games, food, music etc.

**Fiesta** – Yaqui ritual event, pahko in Yaqui language.

**Flag girl** – girls who carry flags and wave them when necessary, part of the church group.

**Flower mat** – a mat filled with flowers, taken around the kontis, also used on the Saturday of Glory to kill the Fariseos.

**Huya ania** – the wilderness world, also called monte.

**Judas pyre** – where the Judas effigy is burned on Holy Saturday

**Kobanao** – the governor of a Yaqui town

**Komadre** – co-godmother, the godmothers of a person are komadre to each other

**Konti** – as a noun, the procession around the way of the cross, the circular way around the church. As a verb, the act of making a procession around the konti. Also spelled conty or conti.

**Lotería** – a bingo type game

**Main cross** – permanent wooden cross in front of the church.

**Maestro** – Yaqui priest, also called Rezante

**Malhumor** – the Judas effigy

**Manda** – a sacred vow to perform ritual duty

**Matachini** – a ceremonial society. The Matachinis only perform at the very end of Easter, they are the most important society the rest of the year.

**Miercoles de tinieblas** – Wednesday of Holy Week, the church goes into darkness and later the light is relit. Also called tenebrae.

**Monte** – the surrounding wilderness, huya ania

**Orejona** – literally “Big Eared,” type of Chapayeka mask considered traditional.

**Pascola** – a ritual clown that performs in the Yaqui deer dance. The “old man” of the fiesta: Pahko’ola in Yaqui.

**Petate** – a mat made of fibers.

**Pilate** – pilato, Pontius Pilate, leader of the Fariseos.

**Pueblo mayor** – one of the traditional leaders in a Yaqui town

**Quinceañera** – a celebration to mark a girl’s 15<sup>th</sup> birthday

**Rebozo** – a shawl worn by women

**Rey** – “king,” a type of Chapayeka mask.

**Rezante** – a Yaqui priest, part of the church group. Also called Maestro.

**Sacristan** – a male member of the church group.

**San Ramos** – a figure of Jesus on a burro, taken around to households on the Saturday before Palm Sunday.



**Seania** –flower world, the wilderness in bloom. Also spelled sea ania.

**Serape** – a blanket, some Chapayeka types wear a serape wrapped around their upper body.

**Sewa** – flower. A very important Yaqui symbol, appears in numerous contexts. Also spelled sea.

**Surem** – mythical ancestors of the Yaquis, now forming a magical presence in the Monte

**Talking Tree** – the Yaqui origin myth, which tells how some of the Surem became the Yaquis

**Teneboim** – cocoon rattles worn by some Chapayeka types and Pascolas around the ankles.

**Tekípanoa** – work, especially ritual work, performing one’s ritual duty

**Tenku ania** – the realm of dreams.

**Viejito** – “Old man,” a term of endearment. Jesus may be called viejito, also certain human-type Chapayeka masks. The young man who represents Jesus at certain points of the ritual is called Viejito.

**Watabaki** – a traditional meat stew eaten at Easter.

**Yaqui sandals** – traditional sandals with a sole attached by leather straps at three points

**Yo’ania** – the ancient, enchanted aspect of the monte.

**Yoeme** – ethnonym for Yaquis

**Yori** – a non-Yaqui Mexican

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